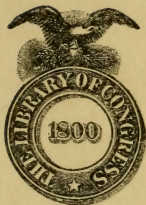


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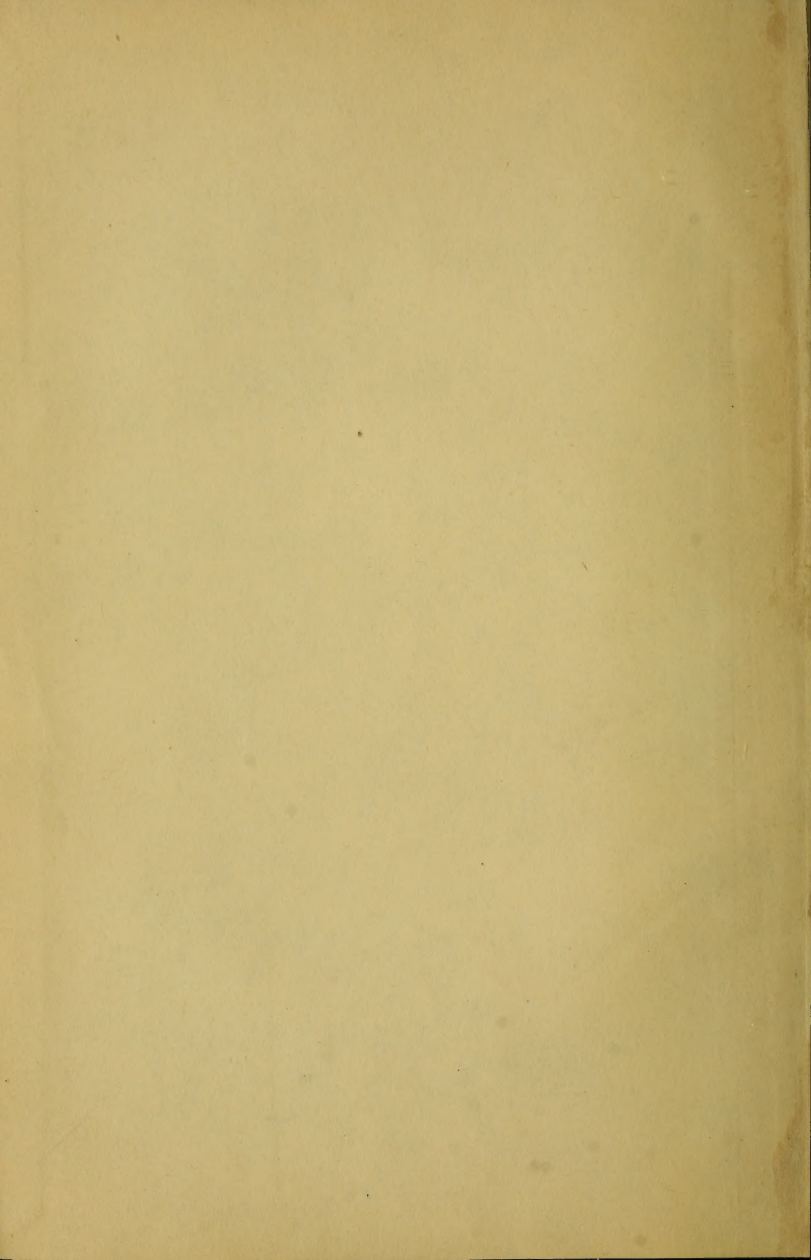
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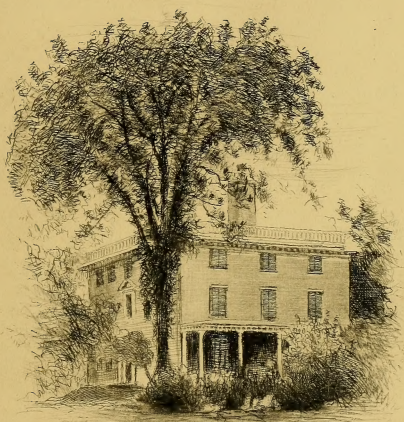
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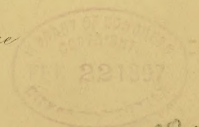
THE COMPLETE  
POETICAL WORKS OF  
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL  
Cambridge Edition



*Elmwood, Cambridge*



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
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The Riverside Press, Cambridge



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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THE present Cambridge Edition of Mr. Lowell's poems contains, substantially in the order established by the author, the poems included by him not long before his death in the definitive Riverside Edition of his writings, and in addition the small group contained in the *Last Poems*, collected by his literary executor, Mr. Charles Eliot Norton. In the brief Prefatory Note to the four volumes of his Poems in the Riverside Edition, Mr. Lowell said : —

"There are a great many pieces in these volumes, especially in the first of them, which I would gladly suppress or put into the Coventry of smaller print in an appendix. But 'ilka mon maun dree his weird,' and the avenging *littera scripta manet* is that of the over-hasty author. Owing to the unjust distinction made by the law between literary and other property, most of what I published prematurely has lost the protection of copyright, and is reprinted by others against my will. I cannot shake off the burthen of my early indiscretions if I would. The best way, perhaps, is to accept with silent contrition the consequences of one's own mistakes, and I have, after much hesitation, consented to the reprinting of the old editions without excision.

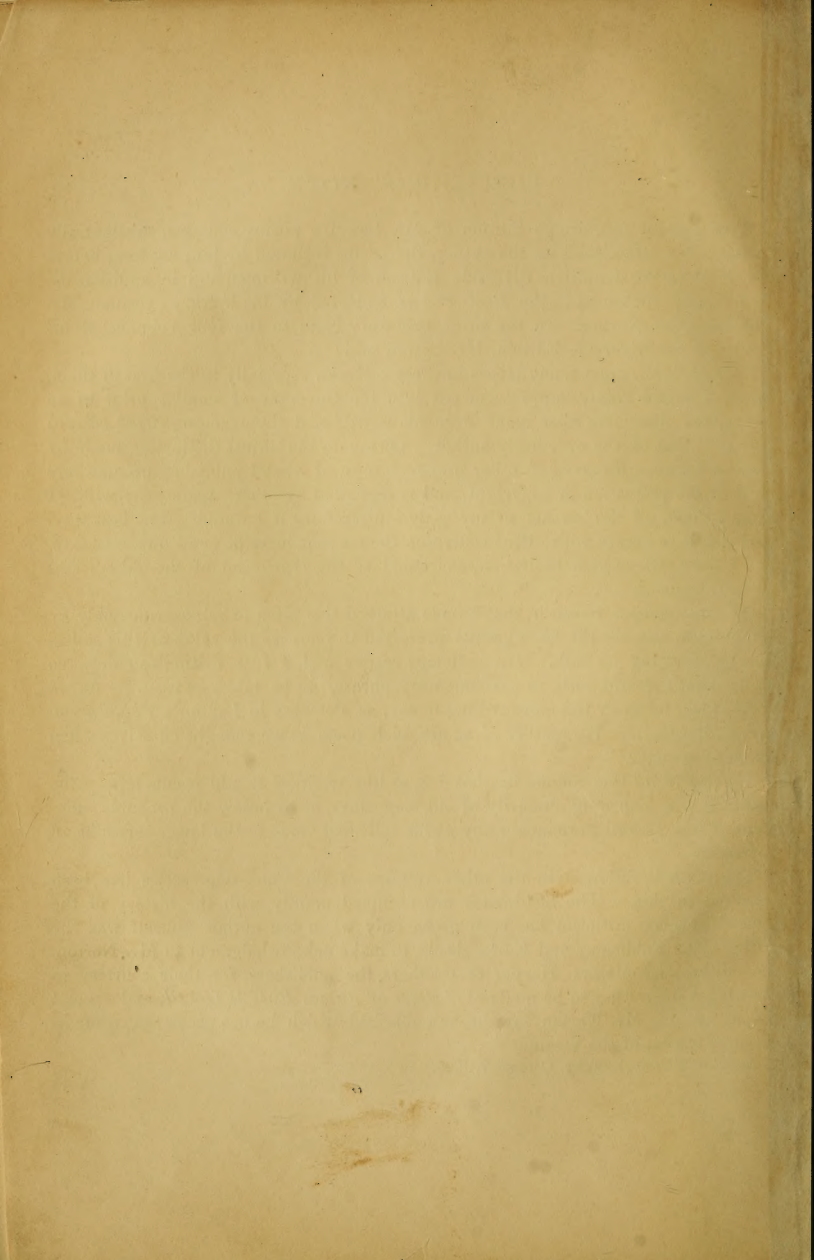
"I must confess, however, that I have attained this pitch of self-sacrifice only by compulsion, and should have greatly preferred to increase the value of this collection by lessening its bulk. The judicious reader will, I fear, distinguish only too easily what I should wish, in parliamentary phrase, 'to be taken as read.' As we grow older, we grow the more willing to say, as Petrarca in Landor's *Pentameron* says to Boccaccio, 'We neither of us are such poets as we thought ourselves when we were younger.'"

The Editor of this volume has not felt at liberty either to add poems left by the author in the deepening obscurity of old magazines, or to follow the probable judgment of Mr. Lowell in reducing any of his collected verse to the lower terms of an appendix.

The method followed in the other volumes of the Cambridge series has been observed in this. The head-notes are occupied mainly with the history of the several poems; criticism has been given only when the author himself was the critic. The Publishers and Editor desire to make acknowledgment to Mr. Norton, the editor, and Messrs. Harper & Brothers, the publishers, for their courtesy in allowing a liberal use to be made of *Letters of James Russell Lowell*, and special thanks are due Mr. Norton for the valuable aid which he has given the editor in the preparation of the volume.

BOSTON, 4 PARK STREET, October 7, 1896.







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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

ABOUT half a mile from the Craigie House in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on the road leading to the old town of Watertown, is Elmwood, a spacious square house set amongst lilac and springa bushes, and overtopped by elms. Pleasant fields are on either side, and from the windows one may look out on the Charles River winding its way among the marshes. The house itself is one of a group which before the war for independence belonged to Boston merchants and officers of the crown, most of whom refused to take the side of the revolutionary party. Tory Row was the name given to the broad winding road on which the houses stood. Large farms and gardens were attached to them, and some sign of their roomy ease still remains. The estates fell into the hands of various persons after the war, and in process of time Longfellow came to occupy and later to own Craigie House. Elmwood at that time was the property of the Reverend Charles Lowell, minister of the West Church in Boston; and when Longfellow thus became his neighbor, James Russell Lowell was a junior in Harvard College. He was born at Elmwood February 22, 1819; he died at the same place August 12, 1891.

He was named for his father's maternal grandfather, and was the youngest of a family of five, two daughters and three sons. His father at the time of Lowell's birth was thirty-seven years old and lived till 1861. His son has drawn his portrait in a letter to C. F. Briggs, written in 1844: "He is Dr. Primrose in a comparative degree, the very simplest and charmingest of sexagenarians, and not without a great deal of the truest magnanimity." It was characteristic of Lowell thus to find a prototype of his father in literature. The Lowells traced their descent from Percival Lowell, — a name which survives in the family, — of Bristol, England, who settled in Newbury, Massachusetts, in 1639. The great-grandfather of James Russell Lowell was a minister in Newburyport, one of those, as Dr. Hale says, "who preached sermons when young men went out to fight the French, and preached sermons again in memory of their death, when they had been slain in battle." The grandfather was John Lowell, a member of the Constitutional Convention of Massachusetts in 1780. It was he who introduced into the Bill of Rights a phrase from the Bill of Rights of Virginia, "All men are created free and equal," with the purpose which it effected of setting free every man then held as a slave in Massachusetts. A son of John Lowell and half-brother of the Rev. Charles Lowell was Francis Cabot Lowell, who gave a great impetus to New England manufactures, and from whom the city of Lowell took its name. Another son, and thus also an uncle of the poet, was John Lowell, Jr., whose wise and far-sighted provision gave his native city that important centre of intellectual influence, the Lowell Institute.

The mother of the poet, Mrs. Harriet Spence Lowell, a native of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, was of Scotch origin. She is described as having "a great memory, an extraordinary aptitude for language, and a passionate fondness for ancient songs and ballads." It pleased her to fancy herself descended from the hero of one of the most famous ballads, Sir Patrick Spens. In a letter to his mother, written in 1837, Lowell says: "I have been engaged in several poetical effusions, one of which I have dedicated to you, who have always been the patron and encourager of my youthful muse." The Russell in his name seems to intimate a strain of Jewish ancestry; at any rate Lowell took pride in

the name on this account, for he was not slow to recognize the intellectual power of the Hebrew race. An older brother of the poet who outlived him a short time, was the Rev. Robert Traill Spence Lowell, who wrote some poems, a story of school-boy life, and a novel, *The New Priest in Conception Bay*, which contains a delightful study of a Yankee and striking sketches of life in Newfoundland, where its author was for a while a missionary. A sister, Mrs. Anna Lowell Putnam, will be remembered among older lovers of literature for a group of singularly fine and thoughtful studies under the title *Records of an Obscure Life*.

Not long before his death, Lowell wrote to an English friend a description of Elmwood; and as he was very fond of the house in which he lived and died, it is agreeable to read words which strove to set it before the eyes of one who had never seen it. "It is a pleasant old house, just about twice as old as I am, four miles from Boston, in what was once the country and is now a populous suburb. But it still has some ten acres of open about it, and some fine old trees. When the worst comes to the worst (if I live so long) I shall still have four and a half acres left with the house, the rest belonging to my brothers and sisters or their heirs. It is a square house, with four rooms on a floor like some houses of the Georgian era I have seen in English provincial towns, only they are of brick, and this is of wood. But it is solid with its heavy oaken beams, the spaces between which in the four outer walls are filled in with brick, though you must n't fancy a brick-and-timber house, for outwardly it is sheathed with wood. Inside there is much wainscot (of deal), painted white in the fashion of the time when it was built. It is very sunny, the sun rising so as to shine (at an acute angle to be sure) through the northern windows, and going round the other three sides in the course of the day. There is a pretty staircase with the quaint old twisted banisters, — which they call balusters now; but mine are banisters. My library occupies two rooms opening into each other by arches at the sides of the ample chimneys. The trees I look out on are the earliest things I remember. There you have me in my new-old quarters. But you must not fancy a large house — rooms sixteen feet square, and on the ground floor, nine high. It was large, as things went here, when it was built, and has a certain air of amplitude about it as from some inward sense of dignity." In an earlier letter he wrote: "Here I am in my garret. I slept here when I was a little curly-headed boy, and used to see visions between me and the ceiling, and dream the so often recurring dream of having the earth put into my hand like an orange. In it I used to be shut up without a lamp, — my mother saying that none of her children should be afraid of the dark, — to hide my head under the pillow, and then not be able to shut out the shapeless monsters that thronged around me, minted in my brain. . . . In winter my view is a wide one, taking in a part of Boston. I can see one long curve of the Charles and the wide fields between me and Cambridge, and the flat marshes beyond the river, smooth and silent with glittering snow. As the spring advances and one after another of our trees puts forth, the landscape is cut off from me piece by piece, till, by the end of May, I am closeted in a cool and rustling privacy of leaves."

Elmwood in the days of Lowell's boyhood was in a more distinctly rural neighborhood than now, and until lately had the charm of seclusion. In his papers "My Garden Acquaintance" and "A Good Word for Winter," in many of his poems, such as "An Indian-Summer Reverie," "To the Dandelion," "Under the Willows," "Al Fresco," and in many passages in his letters, he bears witness to the intimacy which he enjoyed with that phase of nature which we may call homely and friendly. He once expressed to me his delight in Poussin's landscapes, not because of their homeliness, for they have

nothing of this quality, but because of their stately, classical scenery, and the beauty of their composition; but in his descriptive poetry it is noticeable that the large, solemn, or expansive scenes of nature make no such appeal to his interest as those nearer vistas which come close to human life and connect themselves with the familiar experience of home-keeping wits. His lively paper "Cambridge Thirty Years Ago" contains many reminiscences of his early life and associations.

Lowell's school days were spent in his own neighborhood. Mr. William Wells, an Englishman and at one time a publisher, opened a classical school in one of the spacious Tory Row houses near Elmwood, and, bringing with him English public school thoroughness and severity, gave the boy a drilling in Latin which his quick appropriation of strong influences turned into a familiar possession, to judge by the ease with which he handled it afterward in mock heroics. Possibly the heavy hand of the schoolmaster, by its repression, gave greater buoyancy to the spirit of the student when the comparative freedom of college followed. Lowell was in his sixteenth year when he entered Harvard College with the class which graduated in 1838. He lived at his father's house, more than a mile away from the college yard; but this could have been no great privation to him, for he had the freedom of his friends' rooms, and he loved the open air. The Rev. Edward Everett Hale has given a sketch of their common life in college. "He was a little older than I," he says, "and was one class in advance of me. My older brother, with whom I lived in college, and he were most intimate friends. He had no room within the college walls [he had for a time a room close by on Church Street], and was a great deal with us. The fashion of Cambridge was then literary. Now the fashion of Cambridge runs to social problems, but then we were interested in literature. We read Byron and Shelley and Keats, and we began to read Tennyson and Browning. I first heard of Tennyson from Lowell, who had borrowed from Mr. Emerson the little first volume of Tennyson. We actually passed about Tennyson's poems in manuscript. Carlyle's essays were being printed at the time, and his *French Revolution*. In such a community — not two hundred and fifty students all told — literary effort was, as I say, the fashion, and literary men, among whom Lowell was recognized from the very first, were special favorites. Indeed, there was that in him which made him a favorite everywhere."

Lowell was a reader, as so many of his fellows were, and the letters which he wrote shortly after leaving college show how intent he had been on making acquaintance with the best things in literature. He began also to scribble verse, and he wrote both poems and essays for college magazines, and literary societies. His class chose him their poet for Class Day, and he wrote his poem; but he was careless about conforming to college regulations respecting attendance at morning prayers; and for this was suspended from college the last term of his last year, and not allowed to come back to deliver his poem. He was sent to Concord for his rustication, and so passed a few weeks of his youth among scenes dear to every lover of American history and letters.

In "An Indian-Summer Reverie" Lowell says: —

"Though lightly prized the ribboned parchments three,  
Yet *collegisse juvat*, I am glad  
That here what colleging was mine I had, —  
It linked another tie, dear native town, with thee!"

Whether or no there had been a reaction from the discipline of school days, it is certain that the independence which characterized Lowell throughout his life found expression in his college days, not in insubordination, but in a frank pursuit of those courses of study



and lines of reading to which he was led by his own likings and which the tolerable equipment of the college and home library put it in his power to follow. "Never," says Lowell in his essay, "A Great Public Character," when speaking of college life,—"Never were we ourselves so capable of the various great things we have never done ;" and however much he may have been generalizing for college youth, he recalled well his own spiritual experience ; with an impulse which outwardly was wayward, he obeyed that law of his being which his growing consciousness of intellectual power disclosed to him. In his penetrating discrimination between talent and genius, he says profoundly : "The man of talents possesses them like so many tools, does his job with them, and there an end ; but the man of genius is possessed by it, and it makes him into a book or a life according to its whim. Talent takes the existing moulds and makes its castings better or worse, of richer or baser metal, according to knack and opportunity ; but genius is always shaping new ones and runs the man in them, so that there is always that human feel in the results which give us a kindred thrill. *What* it will make, we can only conjecture, contented always with knowing the infinite balance of possibility against which it can draw at pleasure." His was a singularly self-centred nature, and he was always true to those large ideals which he drew from history and literature ; but so various were his intellectual interests and so abundant his capacities, that the precise direction was uncertain in which his genius would at any time take him.

It is interesting to observe this self-centred nature in its early struggle after equipoise. After his graduation he set about the study of law, and for a short time even was a clerk in a counting-room ; but his bent was strongly toward literature. His vacillation of mind regarding his vocation, his apparent fickleness of purpose, the conflict going on between his nature craving expression and the world with its imperious demands, the stirring within him of large designs, and the happy contentment in the pleasures of the day, all seek outlet in his natural yet uneasy letters. He was finding himself in these early days, as many another young man, and there are glimpses all through Lowell's letters of this restlessness, this subtle sense of one's self which in weaker natures hardens into a mordant self-consciousness. Now and then he turns upon himself in a sort of mingled pride and shame, as if at once aware of his power and angry that he has it not wholly at his beck. But for the most part one is aware of a nature singularly at one with life and finding its greatest satisfaction in getting at the world through the reflection of the world in literature. \* No one would deny that Lowell was eminently a man of books, but it would be a wholly inadequate phrase which described him as a bookish man. That he was at home in a library his early letters show ; but they show also how even then he read through his books into life, and interpreted history and literature by means of an innate spiritual faculty which was independent of intellectual authority. It is this criticism at first hand, this swift, direct penetration of the reality, which mark emphatically what we have characterized as Lowell's self-centred nature. He has told us that his brain required a long brooding time ere it could hatch anything. He was speaking of the matter of expression ; but the phrase is a fit one for his habitual temper. The superficial charge of indolence could apply only to his apparent disregard of bustling activity. His nature was of the sort that knows the power of stillness, and though he upbraids himself in his letters for his unproductiveness at times, he had plainly the instinct which waits an opportunity. His faculty of observation was very strong, but it was no stronger than his power of assimilation ; and thus it was that when opportunity came he had not hurriedly to adjust himself to the situation.

It was while he was engaged with his books and his friends, professing law but prac-



tising literature in the way of poetical and prose contributions to the magazines, that he was roused out of his dreams by the prick of necessity in the sudden loss by his father of much of his property, and by the impulse given to his own moral force by the coming into his life of Maria White. He became engaged to this lady in the fall of 1840, and the next twelve years of his life were profoundly affected by her influence. Herself a poet of delicate power, she brought an intelligent sympathy with his work ; it was, however, her strong moral enthusiasm, her lofty conception of purity and justice, which kindled his spirit and gave force and direction to a character which was ready to respond and yet might otherwise have delayed active expression. They were not married until 1844, but they were not far apart in their homes, and during these years Lowell was making those early ventures in literature, and first raids upon political and moral evil, which foretold the direction of his later work, and gave some hint of its abundance.

In 1841 he collected the poems which he had written and sometimes contributed to periodicals into a volume entitled *A Year's Life*, and inscribed in a veiled dedication to his future wife. In hopes of bettering his fortune, and in obedience to the instinct which most young men of letters have, he undertook with Robert Carter the publication of a literary journal, *The Pioneer*, which died under their inexperienced hands with the third number, but in those had printed contributions by Lowell, Hawthorne, Whittier, Story, Poe, and Dr. Parsons, — a group which it would be hard to match in any of the little magazines that hop across the world's path to-day. He began also to turn his studies in dramatic and early poetic literature to account, and, after printing a portion of them in Nathan Hale's *Miscellany*, published, in 1844, *Conversations on some of the Old Poets*. He did not keep this book alive ; but it is interesting as marking the enthusiasm of a young scholar treading a way then almost wholly neglected in America, and indicating a line of thought and study in which he afterwards made most noteworthy venture. In the same year he again collected his poetic work into a volume of *Poems*. The difference between the two volumes of poems, though separated by three years only, is marked. Few of the verses from *A Year's Life* are included in the poet's final collection of his writings, few are omitted from *Poems*. One poem in the earlier volume, *Irené*, is conspicuous as a poetic portrait of the figure of peace which had come into his somewhat turbulent spiritual life ; but the volume as a whole is characterized by vague sentimentalism and restless beating of half-grown wings. Three years later, some of this same immaturity is discoverable, but along with the poems which wander in somewhat unmeaning ways are those spirited adventures like "Rhæcus," "The Shepherd of King Admetus," and "Prometheus," which denote the growing consciousness of positive poetic power, and also those stirring Sonnets to Wendell Phillips and J. R. Giddings, and the lines entitled "A Glance behind the Curtain," which disclose a new passion leaping up as the champion of truth and righteousness. It is noticeable, too, that in the first volume there is no trace of humor and scarcely any singular felicity of phrase ; in the second, wit and humor begin to play a little on the surface. In *Conversations*, where the familiar form gives freer scope, there is a gayety of speech which intimates the spontaneity of the man and anticipates the rich fruitage of later years. In all these books, however, there is good evidence of the rapid growth which was taking place in Lowell's intellectual and moral life, a coming to his own which it would take only some strong occasion to make sure.

This occasion was the Mexican War, with the greater contest which flamed up with it over the encroachments of slavery. Lowell and his wife, who brought a fervid anti-slavery temper as part of her marriage portion, were both contributors to the *Liberty Bell*,

and Lowell was a frequent contributor to the *Antislavery Standard*, and was indeed for a while a corresponding editor; but in June, 1846, there appeared one day in the *Boston Courier* a letter purporting to be from Mr. Ezekiel Biglow of Jalaam to the Hon. Joseph T. Buckingham, editor of the *Boston Courier*, enclosing a poem of his son, Mr. Hosea Biglow. It was no new thing to seek to arrest the public attention with the vernacular applied to public affairs. Major Jack Downing and Sam Slick had been notable examples, and they had many imitators; but the reader who laughed over the racy narrative of the unlettered Ezekiel, and then took up Hosea's poem and caught the gust of Yankee wrath and humor blown fresh in his face, knew that he was in with the appearance of something new in American literature. A score of years afterward, when introducing the Second Series of *The Biglow Papers*, Lowell confessed that when he wrote this letter and poem he had no definite plan, and no intention of ever writing another. It was struck out from him by the revolt of his nature at the iniquity of slavery and the war into which slavery was dragging the nation. But he adds, "The success of my experiment soon began not only to astonish me, but to made me feel the responsibility of knowing that I held in my hand a weapon, instead of the mere fencing stick I had supposed. . . . If I put on the cap and bells, and made myself one of the court fools of King Demos, it was less to make his Majesty laugh than to win a passage to his royal ears for certain serious things which I had deeply at heart."

*The Biglow Papers* not only gave Lowell to himself and opened the flood gates of his patriotism and his noble indignation; they gave him a public, and thus furnished the complement which every author demands. "Very far," he says, in the same Introduction, "from being a popular author under my own name, so far, indeed, as to be almost unread, I found the verses of my pseudonym copied everywhere; I saw them pinned up in workshops; I heard them quoted and their authorship debated." The force which he displayed in these satires made his book at once a powerful ally of a sentiment which heretofore had been ridiculed; it turned the tables and put Antislavery, which had been fighting sturdily on foot with pikes, into the saddle, and gave it a flashing sabre. For Lowell himself it won an accolade from King Demos. He rose up a knight, and thenceforth possessed a freedom which was a freedom of nature, not a simple badge of service in a single cause. His patriotism and moral fervor found other vents in later life, and he never laid down the sword which he then took up, but it is significant of the stability of his genius that he was not misled by the sudden distinction which came to him into a limitation of his powers. It was shortly after this that he wrote, in one of those poetic absences from his every-day life, which were to overtake him more than once afterward, his *Vision of Sir Launfal*; and the exuberance of his nature, together with his keen power of criticism, found expression about the same time in his witty *Fable for Critics*, in which he hit off, with a rough and ready wit, the characteristics of the writers of the day, not forgetting himself in these lines:—

There is Lowell, who 's striving Parnassus to climb  
 With a whole bale of *isms* tied together with rhyme;  
 He might get on alone, spite of brambles and boulders,  
 But he can't with that bundle he has on his shoulders;  
 The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh reaching  
 Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing and preaching;  
 His lyre has some chords that would ring pretty well,  
 But he 'd rather by half make a drum of the shell,  
 And rattle away till he 's old as Methusalem,  
 At the head of a march to the last new Jerusalem.

This, of course, is but a half serious portrait of himself, and it touches but a single feature. A third volume of *Poems* appeared in the same year, 1848, as the last named.

A year in Europe, 1851-52, with his wife, whose health was then precarious, stimulated his scholarly interests, and gave substance to his study of Dante and Italian literature. In October, 1853, his wife died; she had borne him four children: the first-born, Blanche, died in infancy, as did the second, Rose; the third, Walter, also died young; the fourth, a daughter, Mrs. Burnett, survived her parents. In 1855 he was chosen successor to Mr. Longfellow as Smith Professor of the French and Spanish Languages and Literatures, and Professor of Belles Lettres in Harvard College. He spent two years in Europe in further preparation for the duties of his office, and in 1857 was again established in Cambridge and installed in his academic chair. He married also at this time his second wife, Miss Frances Dunlap, of Portland, Maine.

Lowell was now in his thirty-ninth year. As a scholar, in his professional work, he had acquired a knowledge of the Romance languages and was an adept in Old French and Provençal poetry; he had given a course of twelve lectures on English Poetry before the Lowell Institute in Boston which had made a strong impression on the community; and his work on the series of *British Poets* in connection with Professor Child, especially his biographical sketch of Keats, had been recognized as of a high order. In poetry he had published the volumes already mentioned. In general literature he had printed in magazines the papers which he afterward collected into his volume *Fire-side Travels*. Not long after he entered on his college duties *The Atlantic Monthly* was started, and the editorship given to him. For the details of the office he had little aptitude, although he looked keenly after nice points of literary finish in the proof-reading; he was relieved of much of the detail by his active assistant, Mr. F. H. Underwood, to whom the inception of the magazine was largely due. But the *Atlantic* afforded a good outlet for his literary production, and though he held the editorship but a little more than two years he stamped the magazine with the impress of his high ideals in literature and criticism; his selection of articles was judicious, his own contributions and criticism were full of life, and he was most generous in his critical aid to contributors. In 1862 he was associated with Mr. Charles Eliot Norton in the conduct of *The North American Review*, and continued in this charge for ten years. Much of his prose was contributed to this periodical.

These twenty years, from 1857 to 1877, were the most productive period of Lowell's literary activity. He was in the maturity of his mental power, he held a convenient position in University life, his home relations were congenial and stimulating, and his collegiate work, as well as his editorial charge successively of the *Atlantic* and *North American*, gave him a needed impulse to literary effort. During this period appeared the most of that body of literary history and criticism which marks him as the most distinguished of American critics. Any one reading the titles of the papers which comprise the volumes of his prose writings will readily see how much literature, and especially poetic literature, occupied his attention. Shakespeare, Dryden, Lessing, Rousseau, Dante, Spenser, Wordsworth, Milton, Keats, Carlyle, Percival, Thoreau, Swinburne, Chaucer, Emerson, Pope, Gray, — these are the principal subjects of his prose, and the range of topics indicates the catholicity of his taste. These papers are the rich deposit of a mind at once sympathetic and discriminating, capable of enjoying to the full the varied manifestations of life in literature, and combining judicial fairness with keen critical insight.

While this broad stream of literary criticism was flowing, there was another expression



of Lowell's nature, never divorced from this love of letters, — a criticism of life, especially as it took form in contemporaneous American history. The period which I have named covered the preparation for the war for the Union, that war itself, and the reconstruction era afterward, and the expression of Lowell's nature in its attitude toward the whole period was manifold. The volume of *Political Essays* contains the incisive papers which stung the irresolute and time-serving, and inspirited the ardent lovers of truth and liberty. It is impossible to read these papers now without admiration for the political sagacity of the writer, — a sagacity before the event, not after. Every page bears witness to the sanity with which he regarded contemporaneous affairs, when madness seemed the most natural temper in the world, and his insight of human nature was that of a poet who did not regard his power of vision as excluding the necessity of paying taxes. History has been supplying foot-notes to these pages, with the result, not of correcting the text, but of confirming it.

In this same period also he wrote and published the Second Series of *The Biglow Papers*, and used his satire and his moral indignation with a depth of feeling which surpassed that shown in the first series, a little to the detriment thereby, it may be, of the gaiety of the humor. In truth, strong as was Lowell's power of invective, his passion of patriotism found this vent too narrow; there was a large, constructive imagination at work on the great theme of national life, which found fuller expression in the Odes which the Centennial and Commemorative occasions called out. Lowell seized these occasions with a spirit which scarcely needed them, and merely employed them as fit opportunities for casting in large moulds the great thoughts and feelings which rose out of the life of a man conscious of his inheritance in a noble patrimony.

It was at the close of this period, in which he had done incalculable service to the Republic, that Lowell was called on to represent the country, first at Madrid, where he was sent by President Hayes in 1877, and afterwards at London, to which he was transferred in 1880. He had a good knowledge of Spanish language and literature when he went to Spain, but he at once took pains to make his knowledge fuller and his accent more perfect, so that he could have intimate relations with the best Spanish men of the time. In England he was at once a most welcome guest, and a most effective public speaker. Eight years were thus spent by him in the foreign service of the country. His sole participation in practical politics, as the term is, up to this time had been to attend a national convention once as delegate, and to have his name used as Presidential Elector. To the minds of many of his countrymen he seemed doubtless a dilettante in politics. Special preparation in diplomacy he had not, but he had what was more fundamental, a large nature enriched by a familiar intercourse with great minds, and so sane, so sound in its judgment, that whether he was engaged in determining a reading in an Elizabethan dramatist or in deciding to which country an Irish colossus belonged, he was bringing his whole nature to the bench. No one can read Lowell's despatches from Madrid and London without being struck by his sagacity, his readiness in emergencies, his interest in and quick perception of the political situation in the country where he was resident, and his unerring knowledge as a man of the world. Nor could Lowell lay aside in his official communications the art and the wit which were native to him. "I asked Lord Lyons," he writes in one letter, "whether he did not think suzerainty might be defined as 'leaving to a man the privilege of carrying the saddle and bridle after you have stolen his horse.' He assented."

But though Lowell's studies and experience had given him a preparation for dealing with diplomatic questions, the firmness with which he held his political faith afforded as



sure a preparation for that more significant embassy which he bore from the American people to the English. Not long after his return he published a little volume containing the more important speeches which he had made while in England. Most of them had to do with literature, but the title-address in the volume, *Democracy*, was an epigrammatic confession of political faith as hopeful as it was wise and keen. A few years later he gave another address to his own countrymen on "The Place of the Independent in Politics." It was a noble *apologia*, not without a trace of discouragement at the apparently sluggish movement of the recent years, but with that faith in the substance of his countrymen which gave him the right to use words of honest scorn and warning. What impresses one especially in reading this address, remembering the thoughtless gibes which had been flung at this patriot, is the perfect self-respect with which he defines his position, the entire absence of petty retaliation upon his aspersers, the kindliness of nature, the charity, in a word, which is the finest outcome of a strong political faith. It must have been galling to Lowell to find himself taunted with being un-American. He could afford to meet such a charge with silence, but he answered it with something better than silence when he reprinted in a volume his scattered political essays.

The public life of Mr. Lowell made him more of a figure before the world. He received honors from societies and universities; he was decorated by the highest honors which Harvard could pay officially, and Oxford and Cambridge, St. Andrews and Edinburgh, and Bologna, gave gowns. He established warm personal relations with Englishmen, and after his release from public office he made several visits to England. There, too, was buried his wife, who died in 1885. The closing years of his life in his own country, though touched with domestic loneliness and diminished by growing physical infirmities that predicted his death, were rich also with the continued expression of his large personality. He delivered the public address in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of Harvard University, he gave a course of lectures on the Old English Dramatists before the Lowell Institute, he collected a volume of his poems, he spoke and wrote on public affairs, and the year before his death revised, rearranged, and carefully edited a definitive series of his writings in ten volumes. Since his death three small volumes have been added to his collected writings, and Mr. Norton has published *Letters of James Russell Lowell* in two volumes.

For anything like an adequate apprehension of Lowell's rich nature, the reader unacquainted with him during his lifetime, needs to read these *Letters* and the whole body of his prose and poetry; a nature at once so spontaneous and so lavish of its best gifts is not to be bounded by the arbitrary limits of a biography, brief or extended. Yet the poems alone as contained in this volume do much to reveal to the attentive reader the personality of their author. He was the most companionable of men, and shared his large gifts with chance acquaintance so freely that one sometimes wondered what he saved for more intimate friends; and yet his fine reserve was apparent even to those who knew him best. The humor which underlies so much even of his stately verse was a constant quantity in his temperament, closely allied with shrewd sagacity; the sentiment and fancy which find expression sometimes in an entire poem, more often in phrase and line, played about his conversation in familiar intercourse; but as his verse when read in its fulness is charged with noble passion and with an imagination in which human experience and personal emotion are fused in a high ideal, so no one could long be with the poet without recognizing that he was in the presence of a character which combined the unflinching earnestness of the Puritan with the mellowness of a man of the great world.

H. E. S.



## EARLIER POEMS

THE first book of poetry issued by Lowell, if we except the pamphlet containing his *Class Poem*, was *A Year's Life*, published in 1841 by C. C. Little and J. Brown, Boston. It contained thirty-two poems and songs and thirty-five sonnets, besides a *l'envoi* headed "Goe, Little Booke," and a dedication addressed, though not formally, to Miss Maria White, to whom he had become engaged in the fall of 1840.

The gentle Una I have loved,  
The snowy maiden, pure and mild,  
Since ever by her side I roved  
Through ventures strange, a wondering child,  
In fantasy a Red Cross Knight  
Burning for her dear sake to fight.

If there be one who can, like her,  
Make sunshine in life's shady places,  
One in whose holy bosom stir  
As many gentle household graces, —  
And such I think there needs must be, —  
Will she accept this book from me ?

The poems which filled the volume had appeared in *The Knickerbocker*, *The Southern Literary Messenger*, and some of the Boston

newspapers. How little value the author set upon the contents of this first volume is evident when one discovers that on making his first general collection of poems in 1849, he retained but seven of those printed in *A Year's Life*. He continued to contribute to the magazines of his time, especially to *The Democratic Review*, *Graham's Magazine*, *The Boston Miscellany*, and *The Pioneer*, the last named being a very short-lived magazine which he conducted in company with Mr. Robert Carter, and in 1843 he issued a second volume of *Poems*, in which he gathered the product of the intervening time, whether printed or in manuscript. The division *Earlier Poems*, first used in the collection dated 1877, contains but seven of the poems, two of them being sonnets included in *A Year's Life*. Of the thirty-five poems and thirty-seven sonnets printed in the 1843 volume of *Poems*, seven poems and thirteen sonnets were silently dropped from later collections, and the poems included in the two volumes were distributed mainly between the two divisions *Earlier Poems* and *Miscellaneous Poems*.

## THRENODIA

As first printed in *The Knickerbocker* magazine for May, 1839, this poem bore the title *Threnodia on an Infant*, and was signed H. P., the initials for Hugh Perceval, a pseudonym which Lowell used occasionally at the outset of his career. In a letter to G. B. Loring, upon the appearance of the poem, Lowell says that his brother Robert animadverted on the irregular metre of the *Threnodia*; "but as I think," he adds, "very unphilosophically and without much perception of the true rules of poetry. In my opinion no verse ought to be longer than the writer can sensibly make it. It has been this senseless stretching of verses to make them octo- or deka-syllabic or what not, that has brought such an abundance of useless epithets on the shoulders of poor English verse."

GONE, gone from us ! and shall we see  
Those sibyl-leaves of destiny,  
Those calm eyes, nevermore ?

Those deep, dark eyes so warm and bright,  
Wherein the fortunes of the man  
Lay slumbering in prophetic light,  
In characters a child might scan ?  
So bright, and gone forth utterly !  
Oh stern word — Nevermore !

The stars of those two gentle eyes  
Will shine no more on earth;  
Quenched are the hopes that had their  
birth,  
As we watched them slowly rise,  
Stars of a mother's fate;  
And she would read them o'er and o'er,  
Pondering, as she sate,  
Over their dear astrology,  
Which she had conned and conned before,  
Deeming she needs must read aright  
What was writ so passing bright.  
And yet, alas ! she knew not why,  
Her voice would falter in its song,

And tears would slide from out her eye,  
 Silent, as they were doing wrong.  
 Oh stern word — Nevermore !

The tongue that scarce had learned to  
 claim

An entrance to a mother's heart  
 By that dear talisman, a mother's name,  
 Sleeps all forgetful of its art !  
 I loved to see the infant soul  
 (How mighty in the weakness  
 Of its untutored meekness !)  
 Peep timidly from out its nest,  
 His lips, the while,  
 Fluttering with half-fledged words,  
 Or hushing to a smile  
 That more than words expressed,  
 When his glad mother on him stole  
 And snatched him to her breast !  
 Oh, thoughts were brooding in those eyes,  
 That would have soared like strong-winged  
 birds

Far, far into the skies,  
 Gladding the earth with song,  
 And gushing harmonies,  
 Had he but tarried with us long !  
 Oh stern word — Nevermore !

How peacefully they rest,  
 Crossfolded there  
 Upon his little breast,  
 Those small, white hands that ne'er were  
 still before,  
 But ever sported with his mother's hair,  
 Or the plain cross that on her breast she  
 wore !

Her heart no more will beat  
 To feel the touch of that soft palm,  
 That ever seemed a new surprise  
 Sending glad thoughts up to her eyes  
 To bless him with their holy calm, —  
 Sweet thoughts ! they made her eyes as  
 sweet.

How quiet are the hands  
 That wove those pleasant bands !  
 But that they do not rise and sink  
 With his calm breathing, I should think  
 That he were dropped asleep.  
 Alas ! too deep, too deep  
 Is this his slumber !  
 Time scarce can number  
 The years ere he shall wake again.  
 Oh, may we see his eyelids open then !  
 Oh stern word — Nevermore !

As the airy gossamere,  
 Floating in the sunlight clear,  
 Where'er it toucheth clingeth tightly,  
 Round glossy leaf or stump unsightly,  
 So from his spirit wandered out  
 Tendrils spreading all about,  
 Knitting all things to its thrall  
 With a perfect love of all:  
 Oh stern word — Nevermore !

He did but float a little way  
 Adown the stream of time,  
 With dreamy eyes watching the ripples  
 play,  
 Or hearkening their fairy chime;  
 His slender sail  
 Ne'er felt the gale;  
 He did but float a little way,  
 And, putting to the shore  
 While yet 't was early day,  
 Went calmly on his way,  
 To dwell with us no more !  
 No jarring did he feel,  
 No grating on his shallop's keel;  
 A strip of silver sand  
 Mingled the waters with the land  
 Where he was seen no more:  
 Oh stern word — Nevermore !

Full short his journey was; no dust  
 Of earth unto his sandals clave;  
 The weary weight that old men must,  
 He bore not to the grave.  
 He seemed a cherub who had lost his way  
 And wandered hither, so his stay  
 With us was short, and 't was most meet  
 That he should be no delver in earth's clod,  
 Nor need to pause and cleanse his feet  
 To stand before his God:  
 Oh blest word — Evermore !

### THE SIRENS

This poem in *A Year's Life* is dated Nan-  
 tasket, July, 1840.

THE sea is lonely, the sea is dreary,  
 The sea is restless and uneasy;  
 Thou seekest quiet, thou art weary,  
 Wandering thou knowest not whither; —  
 Our little isle is green and breezy,  
 Come and rest thee ! Oh come hither,  
 Come to this peaceful home of ours,  
 Where evermore



The low west-wind creeps panting up the shore

To be at rest among the flowers;  
Full of rest, the green moss lifts,

As the dark waves of the sea  
Draw in and out of rocky rifts,  
Calling solemnly to thee

With voices deep and hollow, —  
"To the shore

Follow! Oh, follow!

To be at rest forevermore!  
Forevermore!"

Look how the gray old Ocean  
From the depth of his heart rejoices,  
Heaving with a gentle motion,  
When he hears our restful voices;  
List how he sings in an undertone,  
Chiming with our melody;  
And all sweet sounds of earth and air  
Melt into one low voice alone,  
That murmurs over the weary sea,  
And seems to sing from everywhere, —  
"Here mayst thou harbor peacefully,  
Here mayst thou rest from the aching oar;

Turn thy curvèd prow ashore,  
And in our green isle rest forevermore!  
Forevermore!"

And Echo half wakes in the wooded hill,  
And, to her heart so calm and deep,  
Murmurs over in her sleep,  
Doubtfully pausing and murmuring still,  
"Evermore!"

Thus, on Life's weary sea,  
Heareth the marinere  
Voices sweet, from far and near,  
Ever singing low and clear,  
Ever singing longingly.

Is it not better here to be,  
Than to be toiling late and soon?  
In the dreary night to see  
Nothing but the blood-red moon  
Go up and down into the sea;  
Or, in the loneliness of day,  
To see the still seals only  
Solemnly lift their faces gray,  
Making it yet more lonely?  
Is it not better than to hear  
Only the sliding of the wave  
Beneath the plank, and feel so near  
A cold and lonely grave,  
A restless grave, where thou shalt lie  
Even in death unquietly?  
Look down beneath thy wave-worn bark,

Lean over the side and see  
The leaden eye of the sidelong shark

Upturnèd patiently,  
Ever waiting there for thee:  
Look down and see those shapeless forms,  
Which ever keep their dreamless sleep

Far down within the gloomy deep,  
And only stir themselves in storms,  
Rising like islands from beneath,  
And snorting through the angry spray,  
As the frail vessel perisheth  
In the whirls of their unwieldy play;

Look down! Look down!  
Upon the seaweed, slimy and dark,  
That waves its arms so lank and brown,  
Beckoning for thee!

Look down beneath thy wave-worn bark  
Into the cold depth of the sea!

Look down! Look down!  
Thus, on Life's lonely sea,  
Heareth the marinere  
Voices sad, from far and near,  
Ever singing full of fear,  
Ever singing dreadfully.

Here all is pleasant as a dream;  
The wind scarce shaketh down the dew,  
The green grass floweth like a stream

Into the ocean's blue;  
Listen! Oh, listen!  
Here is a gush of many streams,

A song of many birds,  
And every wish and longing seems  
Lulled to a numbered flow of words, —

Listen! Oh, listen!  
Here ever hum the golden bees  
Underneath full-blossomed trees,  
At once with glowing fruit and flowers  
crowned;—

So smooth the sand, the yellow sand,  
That thy keel will not grate as it touches  
the land;

All around with a slumberous sound,  
The singing waves slide up the strand,  
And there, where the smooth, wet pebbles be,  
The waters gurgle longingly,  
As if they fain would seek the shore,  
To be at rest from the ceaseless roar,  
To be at rest forevermore, —

Forevermore.

Thus, on Life's gloomy sea,  
Heareth the marinere  
Voices sweet, from far and near,  
Ever singing in his ear,

"Here is rest and peace for thee!"

## IRENÉ

The indirect as well as direct references to Maria White are frequent in these early poems. Lowell, in a letter to G. B. Loring shortly after this poem appeared, wrote: "Maria fills my ideal and I satisfy hers, and I mean to live as one beloved by such a woman should live. She is every way noble. People have called *Irené* a beautiful piece of poetry. And so it is. It owes all its beauty to her."

HERS is a spirit deep, and crystal-clear;  
Calmly beneath her earnest face it lies,  
Free without boldness, meek without a  
fear,

Quicker to look than speak its sympathies;  
Far down into her large and patient eyes  
I gaze, deep-drinking of the infinite,  
As, in the mid-watch of a clear, still night,  
I look into the fathomless blue skies.

So circled lives she with Love's holy  
light,  
That from the shade of self she walketh  
free;

The garden of her soul still keepeth she  
An Eden where the snake did never enter;  
She hath a natural, wise sincerity,  
A simple truthfulness, and these have lent  
her

A dignity as moveless as the centre;  
So that no influence of our earth can stir  
Her steadfast courage, nor can take away  
The holy peacefulness, which night and  
day,

Unto her queenly soul doth minister.

Most gentle is she; her large charity  
(An all unwitting, childlike gift in her)  
Not freer is to give than meek to bear;  
And, though herself not unacquaint with  
care,  
Hath in her heart wide room for all that  
be, —

Her heart that hath no secrets of its own,  
But open is as eglantine full blown.  
Cloudless forever is her brow serene,  
Speaking calm hope and trust within her,  
whence

Welleth a noiseless spring of patience,  
That keepeth all her life so fresh, so green  
And full of holiness, that every look,  
The greatness of her woman's soul reveal-  
ing,

Unto me bringeth blessing, and a feeling  
As when I read in God's own holy book.

A graciousness in giving that doth make  
The small'st gift greatest, and a sense  
most meek

Of worthiness, that doth not fear to take  
From others, but which always fears to  
speak

Its thanks in utterance, for the giver's  
sake; —

The deep religion of a thankful heart,  
Which rests instinctively in Heaven's clear  
law

With a full peace, that never can depart  
From its own steadfastness; — a holy awe  
For holy things, — not those which men  
call holy,

But such as are revealed to the eyes  
Of a true woman's soul bent down and  
lowly

Before the face of daily mysteries; —  
A love that blossoms soon, but ripens  
slowly

To the full goldenness of fruitful prime,  
Enduring with a firmness that defies  
All shallow tricks of circumstance and  
time,

By a sure insight knowing where to cling,  
And where it clingeth never withering; —  
These are Irené's dowry, which no fate  
Can shake from their serene, deep-built  
state.

In-seeing sympathy is hers, which chas-  
teneth

No less than loveth, scorning to be bound  
With fear of blame, and yet which ever  
hasteneth

To pour the balm of kind looks on the  
wound,

If they be wounds which such sweet teach-  
ing makes,

Giving itself a pang for others' sakes;  
No want of faith, that chills with sidelong  
eye,

Hath she; no jealousy, no Levite pride  
That passeth by upon the other side;  
For in her soul there never dwelt a lie.  
Right from the hand of God her spirit  
came

Unstained, and she hath ne'er forgotten  
whence

It came, nor wandered far from thence,  
But laboreth to keep her still the same,

Near to her place of birth, that she may  
not  
Soil her white raiment with an earthly  
spot.

Yet sets she not her soul so steadily  
Above, that she forgets her ties to earth,  
But her whole thought would almost seem  
to be  
How to make glad one lowly human  
hearth;

For with a gentle courage she doth strive  
In thought and word and feeling so to live  
As to make earth next heaven; and her  
heart

Herein doth show its most exceeding worth,  
That, bearing in our frailty her just part,  
She hath not shrunk from evils of this life,  
But hath gone calmly forth into the strife,  
And all its sins and sorrows hath withstood  
With lofty strength of patient womanhood:  
For this I love her great soul more than  
all,

That, being bound, like us, with earthly  
thrall,

She walks so bright and heaven-like there-  
in, —

Too wise, too meek, too womanly, to sin.

Like a lone star through riven storm-  
clouds seen

By sailors, tempest-tost upon the sea,  
Telling of rest and peaceful heavens nigh,  
Unto my soul her star-like soul hath been,  
Her sight as full of hope and calm to  
me; —

For she unto herself hath builded high  
A home serene, wherein to lay her head,  
Earth's noblest thing, a Woman perfected.

### SERENADE

FROM the close-shut windows gleams no  
spark,

The night is chilly, the night is dark,  
The poplars shiver, the pine-trees moan,  
My hair by the autumn breeze is blown,  
Under thy window I sing alone,  
Alone, alone, ah woe ! alone !

The darkness is pressing coldly around,  
The windows shake with a lonely sound,  
The stars are hid and the night is drear,  
The heart of silence throbs in thine ear,

In thy chamber thou sittest alone,  
Alone, alone, ah woe ! alone !

The world is happy, the world is wide,  
Kind hearts are beating on every side;  
Ah, why should we lie so coldly curled  
Alone in the shell of this great world ?  
Why should we any more be alone ?  
Alone, alone, ah woe ! alone !

Oh, 't is a bitter and dreary word,  
The saddest by man's ear ever heard !  
We each are young, we each have a heart,  
Why stand we ever coldly apart ?  
Must we forever, then, be alone ?  
Alone, alone, ah woe ! alone !

### WITH A PRESSED FLOWER

THIS little blossom from afar  
Hath come from other lands to thine;  
For, once, its white and drooping star  
Could see its shadow in the Rhine.

Perchance some fair-haired German maid  
Hath plucked one from the selfsame stalk,  
And numbered over, half afraid,  
Its petals in her evening walk.

"He loves me, loves me not," she cries;  
"He loves me more than earth or heaven !"  
And then glad tears have filled her eyes  
To find the number was uneven.

And thou must count its petals well,  
Because it is a gift from me;  
And the last one of all shall tell  
Something I've often told to thee.

But here at home, where we were born,  
Thou wilt find blossoms just as true,  
Down-bending every summer morn,  
With freshness of New England dew.

For Nature, ever kind to love,  
Hath granted them the same sweet tongue,  
Whether with German skies above,  
Or here our granite rocks among.

### THE BEGGAR

A BEGGAR through the world am I,  
From place to place I wander by.

Fill up my pilgrim's scrip for me,  
For Christ's sweet sake and charity !

A little of thy steadfastness,  
Rounded with leafy gracefulness,  
Old oak, give me,  
That the world's blasts may round me blow,  
And I yield gently to and fro,  
While my stout-hearted trunk below  
And firm-set roots unshaken be.

Some of thy stern, unyielding might,  
Enduring still through day and night  
Rude tempest-shock and withering blight,  
That I may keep at bay  
The changeful April sky of chance  
And the strong tide of circumstance, —  
Give me, old granite gray.

Some of thy pensiveness serene,  
Some of thy never-dying green,  
Put in this scrip of mine,  
That griefs may fall like snow-flakes light,  
And deck me in a robe of white,  
Ready to be an angel bright,  
O sweetly mournful pine.

A little of thy merriment,  
Of thy sparkling, light content,  
Give me, my cheerful brook,  
That I may still be full of glee  
And gladness, where'er I be,  
Though fickle fate hath prisoned me  
In some neglected nook.

Ye have been very kind and good  
To me, since I've been in the wood;  
Ye have gone nigh to fill my heart;  
But good-by, kind friends, every one,  
I've far to go ere set of sun;  
Of all good things I would have part,  
The day was high ere I could start,  
And so my journey's scarce begun.

Heaven help me ! how could I forget  
To beg of thee, dear violet !  
Some of thy modesty,  
That blossoms here as well, unseen,  
As if before the world thou 'dst been,  
Oh, give, to strengthen me.

#### MY LOVE

NOT as all other women are  
Is she that to my soul is dear;

Her glorious fancies come from far,  
Beneath the silver evening-star,  
And yet her heart is ever near.

Great feelings hath she of her own,  
Which lesser souls may never know;  
God giveth them to her alone,  
And sweet they are as any tone  
Wherewith the wind may choose to blow.

Yet in herself she dwelleth not,  
Although no home were half so fair;  
No simplest duty is forgot,  
Life hath no dim and lowly spot  
That doth not in her sunshine share.

She doeth little kindnesses,  
Which most leave undone, or despise:  
For naught that sets one heart at ease,  
And giveth happiness or peace,  
Is low-esteemed in her eyes.

She hath no scorn of common things,  
And, though she seem of other birth,  
Round us her heart entwines and clings,  
And patiently she folds her wings  
To tread the humble paths of earth.

Blessing she is : God made her so,  
And deeds of week-day holiness  
Fall from her noiseless as the snow,  
Nor hath she ever chanced to know  
That aught were easier than to bless.

She is most fair, and thereunto  
Her life doth rightly harmonize;  
Feeling or thought that was not true  
Ne'er made less beautiful the blue  
Unclouded heaven of her eyes.

She is a woman: one in whom  
The spring-time of her childish years  
Hath never lost its fresh perfume,  
Though knowing well that life hath room  
For many blights and many tears.

I love her with a love as still  
As a broad river's peaceful might,  
Which, by high tower and lowly mill,  
Seems following its own wayward will,  
And yet doth ever flow aright.

And, on its full, deep breast serene,  
Like quiet isles my duties lie;  
It flows around them and between,



And makes them fresh and fair and green,  
Sweet homes wherein to live and die.

## SUMMER STORM

UNTREMULOUS in the river clear,  
Toward the sky's image, hangs the imaged  
bridge;

So still the air that I can hear  
The slender clarion of the unseen midge;  
Out of the stillness, with a gathering  
creep,

Like rising wind in leaves, which now de-  
creases,

Now lulls, now swells, and all the while  
increases,

The huddling trample of a drove of  
sheep

Tilts the loose planks, and then as gradu-  
ally ceases

In dust on the other side ; life's emblem  
deep,

A confused noise between two silences,  
Finding at last in dust precarious peace.

On the wide marsh the purple-blossomed  
grasses

Soak up the sunshine; sleeps the brim-  
ming tide,

Save when the wedge-shaped wake in si-  
lence passes

Of some slow water-rat, whose sinuous  
glide

Wavers the sedge's emerald shade from  
side to side;

But up the west, like a rock-shivered surge,  
Climbs a great cloud edged with sun-  
whitened spray;

Huge whirls of foam boil toppling o'er its  
verge,

And falling still it seems, and yet it  
climbs away.

Suddenly all the sky is hid  
As with the shutting of a lid,  
One by one great drops are falling  
Doubtful and slow,

Down the pane they are crookedly crawl-  
ing,

And the wind breathes low;  
Slowly the circles widen on the river,

Widen and mingle, one and all;  
Here and there the slenderer flowers

shiver,  
Struck by an icy rain-drop's fall.

Now on the hills I hear the thunder mutter,  
The wind is gathering in the west;

The upturned leaves first whiten and flutter,  
Then droop to a fitful rest;

Up from the stream with sluggish flap  
Struggles the gull and floats away;

Nearer and nearer rolls the thunder-clap,—  
We shall not see the sun go down to-day:

Now leaps the wind on the sleepy marsh,  
And tramples the grass with terrified feet,

The startled river turns leaden and harsh,  
You can hear the quick heart of the  
tempest beat.

Look ! look ! that livid flash !  
And instantly follows the rattling thunder,

As if some cloud-crag, split asunder,  
Fell, splintering with a ruinous crash,

On the Earth, which crouches in silence  
under;

And now a solid gray wall of rain  
Shuts off the landscape, mile by mile;

For a breath's space I see the blue wood  
again,

And ere the next heart-beat, the wind-  
hurled pile,

That seemed but now a league aloof,  
Bursts crackling o'er the sun-parched  
roof;

Against the windows the storm comes dash-  
ing,

Through tattered foliage the hail tears  
crashing,

The blue lightning flashes,  
The rapid hail clashes,

The white waves are tumbling,  
And, in one baffled roar,

Like the toothless sea mumbling  
A rock-bristled shore,

The thunder is rumbling  
And crashing and crumbling,—

Will silence return nevermore ?

Hush ! Still as death,  
The tempest holds his breath

As from a sudden will;  
The rain stops short, but from the eaves

You see it drop, and hear it from the  
leaves,

All is so bodingly still;  
Again, now, now, again

Plashes the rain in heavy gouts,  
The crinkled lightning

Seems ever brightening,  
And loud and long

Again the thunder shouts  
 His battle-song, —  
 One quivering flash,  
 One wildering crash,  
 Followed by silence dead and dull,  
 As if the cloud, let go,  
 Leapt bodily below  
 To whelm the earth in one mad over-  
 throw,  
 And then a total lull.

Gone, gone, so soon !  
 No more my half-dazed fancy there,  
 Can shape a giant in the air,  
 No more I see his streaming hair,  
 The writhing portent of his form; —  
 The pale and quiet moon  
 Makes her calm forehead bare,  
 And the last fragments of the storm,  
 Like shattered rigging from a fight at sea,  
 Silent and few, are drifting over me.

### LOVE

TRUE Love is but a humble, low-born  
 thing,  
 And hath its food served up in earthen  
 ware;  
 It is a thing to walk with, hand in hand,  
 Through the everydayness of this work-  
 day world,  
 Baring its tender feet to every flint,  
 Yet letting not one heart-beat go astray  
 From Beauty's law of plainness and con-  
 tent;  
 A simple, fireside thing, whose quiet smile  
 Can warm earth's poorest hovel to a home;  
 Which, when our autumn cometh, as it  
 must,  
 And life in the chill wind shivers bare and  
 leafless,  
 Shall still be blest with Indian-summer  
 youth  
 In bleak November, and, with thankful  
 heart,  
 Smile on its ample stores of garnered fruit,  
 As full of sunshine to our aged eyes  
 As when it nursed the blossoms of our  
 spring.  
 Such is true Love, which steals into the  
 heart  
 With feet as silent as the lightsome dawn  
 That kisses smooth the rough brows of the  
 dark,

And hath its will through blissful gentle-  
 ness,  
 Not like a rocket, which, with passionate  
 glare,  
 Whirs suddenly up, then bursts, and leaves  
 the night  
 Painfully quivering on the dazed eyes;  
 A love that gives and takes, that seeth  
 faults,  
 Not with flaw-seeking eyes like needle  
 points,  
 But loving-kindly ever looks them down  
 With the o'ercoming faith that still for-  
 gives;  
 A love that shall be new and fresh each  
 hour,  
 As is the sunset's golden mystery,  
 Or the sweet coming of the evening-star,  
 Alike, and yet most unlike, every day,  
 And seeming ever best and fairest *now*;  
 A love that doth not kneel for what it  
 seeks,  
 But faces Truth and Beauty as their peer,  
 Showing its worthiness of noble thoughts  
 By a clear sense of inward nobleness;  
 A love that in its object findeth not  
 All grace and beauty, and enough to sate  
 Its thirst of blessing, but, in all of good  
 Found there, sees but the Heaven-implanted  
 types  
 Of good and beauty in the soul of man,  
 And traces, in the simplest heart that beats,  
 A family-likeness to its chosen one,  
 That claims of it the rights of brotherhood.  
 For love is blind but with the fleshly eye,  
 That so its inner sight may be more clear;  
 And outward shows of beauty only so  
 Are needful at the first, as is a hand  
 To guide and to uphold an infant's steps:  
 Fine natures need them not: their earnest  
 look  
 Pierces the body's mask of thin disguise,  
 And beauty ever is to them revealed,  
 Behind the unshapeliest, meanest lump of  
 clay,  
 With arms outstretched and eager face  
 ablaze,  
 Yearning to be but understood and loved.

### TO PERDITA, SINGING

THY voice is like a fountain,  
 Leaping up in clear moonshine;  
 Silver, silver, ever mounting,

Ever sinking,  
 Without thinking,  
 To that brimful heart of thine.  
 Every sad and happy feeling,  
 Thou hast had in bygone years,  
 Through thy lips comes stealing, stealing,  
 Clear and low;  
 All thy smiles and all thy tears  
 In thy voice awaken,  
 And sweetness, wove of joy and woe,  
 From their teaching it hath taken:  
 Feeling and music move together,  
 Like a swan and shadow ever  
 Floating on a sky-blue river  
 In a day of cloudless weather.

It hath caught a touch of sadness,  
 Yet it is not sad;  
 It hath tones of clearest gladness,  
 Yet it is not glad;  
 A dim, sweet twilight voice it is  
 Where to-day's accustomed blue  
 Is over-grayed with memories,  
 With starry feelings quivered through.

Thy voice is like a fountain  
 Leaping up in sunshine bright,  
 And I never weary counting  
 Its clear droppings, lone and single,  
 Or when in one full gush they mingle,  
 Shooting in melodious light.

Thine is music such as yields  
 Feelings of old brooks and fields,  
 And, around this pent-up room,  
 Sheds a woodland, free perfume;  
 Oh, thus forever sing to me!  
 Oh, thus forever!

The green, bright grass of childhood bring  
 to me,

Flowing like an emerald river,  
 And the bright blue skies above!  
 Oh, sing them back, as fresh as ever,  
 Into the bosom of my love,—  
 The sunshine and the merriment,  
 The unsought, evergreen content,  
 Of that never cold time,  
 The joy, that, like a clear breeze, went  
 Through and through the old time!

Peace sits within thine eyes,  
 With white hands crossed in joyful rest,  
 While, through thy lips and face, arise  
 The melodies from out thy breast;  
 She sits and sings,

With folded wings  
 And white arms crost,  
 "Weep not for bygone things,  
 They are not lost:  
 The beauty which the summer time  
 O'er thine opening spirit shed,  
 The forest oracles sublime  
 That filled thy soul with joyous dread,  
 The scent of every smallest flower  
 That made thy heart sweet for an hour,  
 Yea, every holy influence,  
 Flowing to thee, thou knewest not whence,  
 In thine eyes to-day is seen,  
 Fresh as it hath ever been;  
 Promptings of Nature, beckonings sweet,  
 Whatever led thy childish feet,  
 Still will linger unawares  
 The guiders of thy silver hairs;  
 Every look and every word  
 Which thou givest forth to-day,  
 Tell of the singing of the bird  
 Whose music stilled thy boyish play."

Thy voice is like a fountain,  
 Twinkling up in sharp starlight,  
 When the moon behind the mountain  
 Dims the low East with faintest white,

Ever darkling,  
 Ever sparkling,

We know not if 't is dark or bright;  
 But, when the great moon hath rolled round,  
 And, sudden-slow, its solemn power  
 Grows from behind its black, clear-edgèd  
 bound,

No spot of dark the fountain keepeth,  
 But, swift as opening eyelids, leapeth  
 Into a waving silver flower.

## THE MOON

MY soul was like the sea,  
 Before the moon was made,  
 Moaning in vague immensity,  
 Of its own strength afraid,  
 Unrestful and unstaid.  
 Through every rift it foamed in vain,  
 About its earthly prison,  
 Seeking some unknown thing in pain,  
 And sinking restless back again,  
 For yet no moon had risen:  
 Its only voice a vast dumb moan,  
 Of utterless anguish speaking,  
 It lay unhopefully alone,  
 And lived but in an aimless seeking.

So was my soul; but when 't was full  
 Of unrest to o'erloading,  
 A voice of something beautiful  
 Whispered a dim foreboding,  
 And yet so soft, so sweet, so low,  
 It had not more of joy than woe;

And, as the sea doth oft lie still,  
 Making its waters meet,  
 As if by an unconscious will,  
 For the moon's silver feet,  
 So lay my soul within mine eyes  
 When thou, its guardian moon, didst rise.

And now, howe'er its waves above  
 May toss and seem uneasy,  
 One strong, eternal law of Love,  
 With guidance sure and peaceful,  
 As calm and natural as breath,  
 Moves its great deeps through life and death.

## REMEMBERED MUSIC

### A FRAGMENT

THICK-RUSHING, like an ocean vast  
 Of bisons the far prairie shaking,  
 The notes crowd heavily and fast  
 As surfs, one plunging while the last  
 Draws seaward from its foamy breaking.

Or in low murmurs they began,  
 Rising and rising momentarily,  
 As o'er a harp Æolian  
 A fitful breeze, until they ran  
 Up to a sudden ecstasy.

And then, like minute-drops of rain  
 Ringing in water silverly,  
 They lingering dropped and dropped again,  
 Till it was almost like a pain  
 To listen when the next would be.

## SONG

TO M. L.

A LILY thou wast when I saw thee first,  
 A lily-bud not opened quite,  
 That hourly grew more pure and white,  
 By morning, and noontide, and evening  
 nursed:  
 In all of nature thou hadst thy share;

Thou wast waited on  
 By the wind and sun;  
 The rain and the dew for thee took care;  
 It seemed thou never couldst be more  
 fair.

A lily thou wast when I saw thee first,  
 A lily-bud; but oh, how strange,  
 How full of wonder was the change,  
 When, ripe with all sweetness, thy full  
 bloom burst!  
 How did the tears to my glad eyes start,  
 When the woman-flower  
 Reached its blossoming hour,  
 And I saw the warm deeps of thy golden  
 heart!

Glad death may pluck thee, but never before  
 The gold dust of thy bloom divine  
 Hath dropped from thy heart into mine,  
 To quicken its faint germs of heavenly lore;  
 For no breeze comes nigh thee but carries  
 away

Some impulses bright  
 Of fragrance and light,  
 Which fall upon souls that are lone and  
 astray,  
 To plant fruitful hopes of the flower of  
 day.

## ALLEGRA

I WOULD more natures were like thine,  
 That never casts a glance before,  
 Thou Hebe, who thy heart's bright wine  
 So lavishly to all dost pour,  
 That we who drink forget to pine,  
 And can but dream of bliss in store.

Thou canst not see a shade in life;  
 With sunward instinct thou dost rise,  
 And, leaving clouds below at strife,  
 Gazest undazzled at the skies,  
 With all their blazing splendors rife,  
 A songful lark with eagle's eyes.

Thou wast some foundling whom the  
 Hours  
 Nursed, laughing, with the milk of  
 Mirth;  
 Some influence more gay than ours  
 Hath ruled thy nature from its birth,  
 As if thy natal stars were flowers  
 That shook their seeds round thee on  
 earth.



And thou, to lull thine infant rest,  
 Wast cradled like an Indian child;  
 All pleasant winds from south and west  
 With lullabies thine ears beguiled,  
 Rocking thee in thine oriole's nest,  
 Till Nature looked at thee and smiled.

Thine every fancy seems to borrow  
 A sunlight from thy childish years,  
 Making a golden cloud of sorrow,  
 A hope-lit rainbow out of tears,—  
 Thy heart is certain of to-morrow,  
 Though 'yond to-day it never peers.

I would more natures were like thine,  
 So innocently wild and free,  
 Whose sad thoughts, even, leap and shine,  
 Like sunny wavelets in the sea,  
 Making us mindless of the brine,  
 In gazing on the brilliancy.

### THE FOUNTAIN

INTO the sunshine,  
 Full of the light,  
 Leaping and flashing  
 From morn till night;

Into the moonlight,  
 Whiter than snow,  
 Waving so flower-like  
 When the winds blow;

Into the starlight  
 Rushing in spray,  
 Happy at midnight,  
 Happy by day;

Ever in motion,  
 Blithesome and cheery,  
 Still climbing heavenward,  
 Never aweary;

Glad of all weathers,  
 Still seeming best,  
 Upward or downward,  
 Motion thy rest;

Full of a nature  
 Nothing can tame,  
 Changed every moment,  
 Ever the same;

Ceaseless aspiring,  
 Ceaseless content,

Darkness or sunshine  
 Thy element;

Glorious fountain,  
 Let my heart be  
 Fresh, changeful, constant,  
 Upward, like thee !

### ODE

#### I

IN the old days of awe and keen-eyed  
 wonder,  
 The Poet's song with blood-warm truth  
 was rife;

He saw the mysteries which circle under  
 The outward shell and skin of daily life.  
 Nothing to him were fleeting time and  
 fashion,

His soul was led by the eternal law;  
 There was in him no hope of fame, no pas-  
 sion,

But with calm, godlike eyes he only saw.  
 He did not sigh o'er heroes dead and  
 buried,

Chief - mourner at the Golden Age's  
 hearse,  
 Nor deem that souls whom Charon grim  
 had ferried

Alone were fitting themes of epic verse:  
 He could believe the promise of to-morrow,  
 And feel the wondrous meaning of to-  
 day;

He had a deeper faith in holy sorrow  
 Than the world's seeming loss could take  
 away.

To know the heart of all things was his  
 duty,

All things did sing to him to make him  
 wise,

And, with a sorrowful and conquering  
 beauty,

The soul of all looked grandly from his  
 eyes.

He gazed on all within him and without  
 him,

He watched the flowing of Time's steady  
 tide,

And shapes of glory floated all about him  
 And whispered to him, and he prophe-  
 sied.

Than all men he more fearless was and  
 freer,

And all his brethren cried with one accord, —

“Behold the holy man ! Behold the Seer !  
Him who hath spoken with the unseen  
Lord !”

He to his heart with large embrace had taken

The universal sorrow of mankind,  
And, from that root, a shelter never shaken,  
The tree of wisdom grew with sturdy  
rind.

He could interpret well the wondrous voices  
Which to the calm and silent spirit come;  
He knew that the One Soul no more rejoices  
In the star’s anthem than the insect’s  
hum.

He in his heart was ever meek and humble,  
And yet with kingly pomp his numbers  
ran,

As he foresaw how all things false should  
crumble

Before the free, uplifted soul of man:  
And, when he was made full to overflowing  
With all the loveliness of heaven and  
earth,

Out rushed his song, like molten iron glow-  
ing,

To show God sitting by the humblest  
hearth.

With calmest courage he was ever ready  
To teach that action was the truth of  
thought,

And, with strong arm and purpose firm and  
steady,

An anchor for the drifting world he  
wrought.

So did he make the meanest man partaker  
Of all his brother-gods unto him gave;  
All souls did reverence him and name him  
Maker,

And when he died heaped temples on his  
grave.

And still his deathless words of light are  
swimming

Serene throughout the great deep infinite  
Of human soul, unwaning and undimming,  
To cheer and guide the mariner at night.

## II

But now the Poet is an empty rhym-  
er  
Who lies with idle elbow on the grass,  
And fits his singing, like a cunning timer,  
To all men’s prides and fancies as they  
pass.

Not his the song, which, in its metre holy,  
Chimes with the music of the eternal  
stars,

Humbling the tyrant, lifting up the lowly,  
And sending sun through the soul’s prison-  
bars.

Maker no more, — oh no ! unmaker rather,  
For he unmakes who doth not all put  
forth

The power given freely by our loving Father  
To show the body’s dross, the spirit’s  
worth.

Awake ! great spirit of the ages olden !  
Shiver the mists that hide thy starry lyre,  
And let man’s soul be yet again beholden  
To thee for wings to soar to her desire.

Oh, prophesy no more to-morrow’s splendor,  
Be no more shamefaced to speak out for  
Truth,

Lay on her altar all the gushings tender,  
The hope, the fire, the loving faith of  
youth !

Oh, prophesy no more the Maker’s coming,  
Say not his onward footsteps thou canst  
hear

In the dim void, like to the awful humming  
Of the great wings of some new-lighted  
sphere !

Oh, prophesy no more, but be the Poet !  
This longing was but granted unto thee  
That, when all beauty thou couldst feel and  
know it,

That beauty in its highest thou shouldst  
be.

O thou who moanest tost with sealike long-  
ings,

Who dimly hearest voices call on thee,  
Whose soul is overfilled with mighty throng-  
ings

Of love, and fear, and glorious agony,  
Thou of the toil-strung hands and iron sinews  
And soul by Mother Earth with freedom  
fed,

In whom the hero-spirit yet continues,  
The old free nature is not chained or  
dead,

Arouse ! let thy soul break in music-thun-  
der,

Let loose the ocean that is in thee pent,  
Pour forth thy hope, thy fear, thy love, thy  
wonder,

And tell the age what all its signs have  
meant.

Where’er thy wildered crowd of brethren  
jostles,

Where'er there lingers but a shadow of  
 wrong,  
 There still is need of martyrs and apos-  
 tles,  
 There still are texts for never-dying song:  
 From age to age man's still aspiring spirit  
 Finds wider scope and sees with clearer  
 eyes,  
 And thou in larger measure dost inherit  
 What made thy great forerunners free  
 and wise.  
 Sit thou enthroned where the Poet's moun-  
 tain  
 Above the thunder lifts its silent peak,  
 And roll thy songs down like a gathering  
 fountain,  
 They all may drink and find the rest they  
 seek.  
 Sing! there shall silence grow in earth and  
 heaven,  
 A silence of deep awe and wondering;  
 For, listening gladly, bend the angels, even,  
 To hear a mortal like an angel sing.

## III

Among the toil-worn poor my soul is seek-  
 ing  
 For who shall bring the Maker's name to  
 light,  
 To be the voice of that almighty speaking  
 Which every age demands to do it right.  
 Proprieties our silken bards environ;  
 He who would be the tongue of this wide  
 land  
 Must string his harp with chords of sturdy  
 iron  
 And strike it with a toil-imbrown'd hand;  
 One who hath dwelt with Nature well at-  
 tended,  
 Who hath learnt wisdom from her mystic  
 books,  
 Whose soul with all her countless lives hath  
 blended,  
 So that all beauty awes us in his looks;  
 Who not with body's waste his soul hath  
 pampered,  
 Who as the clear northwestern wind is  
 free,  
 Who walks with Form's observances un-  
 hampered,  
 And follows the One Will obediently;  
 Whose eyes, like windows on a breezy sum-  
 mit,  
 Control a lovely prospect every way;

Who doth not sound God's sea with earthly  
 plummet,  
 And find a bottom still of worthless clay;  
 Who heeds not how the lower gusts are  
 working,  
 Knowing that one sure wind blows on  
 above,  
 And sees, beneath the foulest faces lurking,  
 One God-built shrine of reverence and  
 love;  
 Who sees all stars that wheel their shining  
 marches  
 Around the centre fixed of Destiny,  
 Where the encircling soul serene o'erarches  
 The moving globe of being like a sky;  
 Who feels that God and Heaven's great  
 deeps are nearer  
 Him to whose heart his fellow-man is  
 nigh,  
 Who doth not hold his soul's own freedom  
 dearer  
 Than that of all his brethren, low or  
 high;  
 Who to the Right can feel himself the truer  
 For being gently patient with the wrong,  
 Who sees a brother in the evil-doer,  
 And finds in Love the heart's-blood of his  
 song;—  
 This, this is he for whom the world is wait-  
 ing  
 To sing the beatings of its mighty heart,  
 Too long hath it been patient with the grat-  
 ing  
 Of scannell-pipes, and heard it misnamed  
 Art.  
 To him the smiling soul of man shall listen,  
 Laying awhile its crown of thorns aside,  
 And once again in every eye shall glisten  
 The glory of a nature satisfied.  
 His verse shall have a great commanding  
 motion,  
 Heaving and swelling with a melody  
 Learnt of the sky, the river, and the ocean,  
 And all the pure, majestic things that be.  
 Awake, then, thou! we pine for thy great  
 presence  
 To make us feel the soul once more sub-  
 lime,  
 We are of far too infinite an essence  
 To rest contented with the lies of Time.  
 Speak out! and lo! a hush of deepest won-  
 der  
 Shall sink o'er all this many-voic'd scene,  
 As when a sudden burst of rattling thunder  
 Shatters the blueness of a sky serene.

## THE FATHERLAND

WHERE is the true man's fatherland ?

Is it where he by chance is born ?

Doth not the yearning spirit scorn  
In such scant borders to be spanned ?

Oh yes ! his fatherland must be  
As the blue heaven wide and free !

Is it alone where freedom is,

Where God is God and man is man ?

Doth he not claim a broader span  
For the soul's love of home than this ?

Oh yes ! his fatherland must be  
As the blue heaven wide and free !

Where'er a human heart doth wear

Joy's myrtle-wreath or sorrow's gyves,

Where'er a human spirit strives

After a life more true and fair,  
There is the true man's birthplace grand,  
His is a world-wide fatherland !

Where'er a single slave doth pine,

Where'er one man may help another, —

Thank God for such a birthright, brother, —

That spot of earth is thine and mine !

There is the true man's birthplace grand,  
His is a world-wide fatherland !

## THE FORLORN

THE night is dark, the stinging sleet,

Swept by the bitter gusts of air,

Drives whistling down the lonely street,

And glazes on the pavement bare.

The street-lamps flare and struggle dim

Through the gray sleet-clouds as they  
pass,

Or, governed by a boisterous whim,

Drop down and rustle on the glass.

One poor, heart-broken, outcast girl

Faces the east-wind's searching flaws,

And, as about her heart they whirl,

Her tattered cloak more tightly draws.

The flat brick walls look cold and bleak,

Her bare feet to the sidewalk freeze;

Yet dares she not a shelter seek,

Though faint with hunger and disease.

The sharp storm cuts her forehead bare,  
And, piercing through her garments thin,  
Beats on her shrunken breast, and there  
Makes colder the cold heart within.

She lingers where a ruddy glow

Streams outward through an open shutter,

Adding more bitterness to woe,

More loneliness to desertion utter.

One half the cold she had not felt

Until she saw this gush of light

Spread warmly forth, and seem to melt

Its slow way through the deadening night.

She hears a woman's voice within,

Singing sweet words her childhood knew,

And years of misery and sin

Furl off, and leave her heaven blue.

Her freezing heart, like one who sinks

Outwearied in the drifting snow,

Drowns to deadly sleep and thinks

No longer of its hopeless woe:

Old fields, and clear blue summer days,

Old meadows, green with grass, and trees

That shimmer through the trembling haze

And whiten in the western breeze,

Old faces, all the friendly past

Rises within her heart again,

And sunshine from her childhood cast

Makes summer of the icy rain.

Enhaloed by a mild, warm glow,

From man's humanity apart,

She hears old footsteps wandering slow

Through the lone chambers of the heart.

Outside the porch before the door,

Her cheek upon the cold, hard stone,

She lies, no longer foul and poor,

No longer dreary and alone.

Next morning something heavily

Against the opening door did weigh,

And there, from sin and sorrow free,

A woman on the threshold lay.

A smile upon the wan lips told

That she had found a calm release,

And that, from out the want and cold,

The song had borne her soul in peace.



For, whom the heart of man shuts out,  
 Sometimes the heart of God takes in,  
 And fences them all round about  
 With silence mid the world's loud din;

And one of his great charities  
 Is Music, and it doth not scorn  
 To close the lids upon the eyes  
 Of the polluted and forlorn;

Far was she from her childhood's home,  
 Farther in guilt had wandered thence,  
 Yet thither it had bid her come  
 To die in maiden innocence.

## MIDNIGHT

THE moon shines white and silent  
 On the mist, which, like a tide  
 Of some enchanted ocean,  
 O'er the wide marsh doth glide,  
 Spreading its ghost-like billows  
 Silently far and wide.

A vague and starry magic  
 Makes all things mysteries,  
 And lures the earth's dumb spirit  
 Up to the longing skies;  
 I seem to hear dim whispers,  
 And tremulous replies.

The fireflies o'er the meadow  
 In pulses come and go;  
 The elm-trees' heavy shadow  
 Weighs on the grass below;  
 And faintly from the distance  
 The dreaming cock doth crow.

All things look strange and mystic,  
 The very bushes swell  
 And take wild shapes and motions,  
 As if beneath a spell;  
 They seem not the same lilacs  
 From childhood known so well.

The snow of deepest silence  
 O'er everything doth fall,  
 So beautiful and quiet,  
 And yet so like a pall;  
 As if all life were ended,  
 And rest were come to all.

O wild and wondrous midnight,  
 There is a might in thee

To make the charm'd body  
 Almost like spirit be,  
 And give it some faint glimpses  
 Of immortality!

## A PRAYER

GOD! do not let my loved one die,  
 But rather wait until the time  
 That I am grown in purity  
 Enough to enter thy pure clime,  
 Then take me, I will gladly go,  
 So that my love remain below!

Oh, let her stay! She is by birth  
 What I through death must learn to be;  
 We need her more on our poor earth  
 Than thou canst need in heaven with thee:  
 She hath her wings already, I  
 Must burst this earth-shell ere I fly.

Then, God, take me! We shall be near,  
 More near than ever, each to each:  
 Her angel ears will find more clear  
 My heavenly than my earthly speech;  
 And still, as I draw nigh to thee,  
 Her soul and mine shall closer be.

## THE HERITAGE

THE rich man's son inherits lands,  
 And piles of brick and stone, and gold,  
 And he inherits soft white hands,  
 And tender flesh that fears the cold,  
 Nor dares to wear a garment old;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

The rich man's son inherits cares;  
 The bank may break, the factory burn,  
 A breath may burst his bubble shares,  
 And soft white hands could hardly earn  
 A living that would serve his turn;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

The rich man's son inherits wants,  
 His stomach craves for dainty fare;  
 With sated heart, he hears the pants  
 Of toiling hinds with brown arms bare,  
 And wearies in his easy-chair;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit ?  
 Stout muscles and a sinewy heart,  
 A hardy frame, a hardier spirit;  
 King of two hands, he does his part  
 In every useful toil and art;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 A king might wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit ?  
 Wishes o'erjoyed with humble things,  
 A rank adjudged by toil-won merit,  
 Content that from employment springs,  
 A heart that in his labor sings;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 A king might wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit ?  
 A patience learned of being poor,  
 Courage, if sorrow come, to bear it,  
 A fellow-feeling that is sure  
 To make the outcast bless his door;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 A king might wish to hold in fee.

O rich man's son ! there is a toil  
 That with all others level stands;  
 Large charity doth never soil,  
 But only whiten, soft white hands;  
 This is the best crop from thy lands,  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 Worth being rich to hold in fee.

O poor man's son ! scorn not thy state;  
 There is worse weariness than thine,  
 In merely being rich and great;  
 Toil only gives the soul to shine,  
 And makes rest fragrant and benign;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 Worth being poor to hold in fee.

Both, heirs to some six feet of sod,  
 Are equal in the earth at last;  
 Both, children of the same dear God,  
 Prove title to your heirship vast  
 By record of a well-filled past;  
 A heritage, it seems to me,  
 Well worth a life to hold in fee.

## THE ROSE: A BALLAD

### I

In his tower sat the poet  
 Gazing on the roaring sea,

"Take this rose," he sighed, "and throw it  
 Where there's none that loveth me.  
 On the rock the billow bursteth  
 And sinks back into the seas,  
 But in vain my spirit thirsteth  
 So to burst and be at ease.  
 Take, O sea ! the tender blossom  
 That hath lain against my breast;  
 On thy black and angry bosom  
 It will find a surer rest.  
 Life is vain, and love is hollow,  
 Ugly death stands there behind,  
 Hate and scorn and hunger follow  
 Him that toileth for his kind."  
 Forth into the night he hurled it,  
 And with bitter smile did mark  
 How the surly tempest whirled it  
 Swift into the hungry dark.  
 Foam and spray drive back to leeward,  
 And the gale, with dreary moan,  
 Drifts the helpless blossom seaward,  
 Through the breakers all alone.

### II

Stands a maiden, on the morrow,  
 Musing by the wave-beat strand,  
 Half in hope and half in sorrow,  
 Tracing words upon the sand:  
 "Shall I ever then behold him  
 Who hath been my life so long,  
 Ever to this sick heart fold him,  
 Be the spirit of his song ?  
 Touch not, sea, the blessed letters  
 I have traced upon thy shore,  
 Spare his name whose spirit fetters  
 Mine with love forevermore !"  
 Swells the tide and overflows it,  
 But, with omen pure and meet,  
 Brings a little rose, and throws it  
 Humbly at the maiden's feet.  
 Full of bliss she takes the token,  
 And, upon her snowy breast,  
 Soothes the ruffled petals broken  
 With the ocean's fierce unrest.  
 "Love is thine, O heart ! and surely  
 Peace shall also be thine own,  
 For the heart that trusteth purely  
 Never long can pine alone."

### III

In his tower sits the poet,  
 Bliss new and strange to him  
 Fill his heart and overflow it  
 With a wonder sweet and dim.

Up the beach the ocean slideth  
 With a whisper of delight,  
 And the moon in silence glideth  
 Through the peaceful blue of night.  
 Rippling o'er the poet's shoulder  
 Flows a maiden's golden hair,  
 Maiden lips, with love grown bolder,  
 Kiss his moon-lit forehead bare.  
 "Life is joy, and love is power,  
 Death all fetters doth unbind,  
 Strength and wisdom only flower  
 When we toil for all our kind.  
 Hope is truth, — the future giveth  
 More than present takes away,  
 And the soul forever liveth  
 Nearer God from day to day."  
 Not a word the maiden uttered,  
 Fullest hearts are slow to speak,  
 But a withered rose-leaf fluttered  
 Down upon the poet's cheek.

## SONG

VIOLET ! sweet violet !  
 Thine eyes are full of tears;  
     Are they wet  
     Even yet  
 With the thought of other years ?  
 Or with gladness are they full,  
 For the night so beautiful,  
 And longing for those far-off spheres ?

Loved one of my youth thou wast,  
 Of my merry youth,  
     And I see,  
     Tearfully,  
 All the fair and sunny past,  
 All its openness and truth,  
 Ever fresh and green in thee  
 As the moss is in the sea.

Thy little heart, that hath with love  
 Grown colored like the sky above,  
 On which thou lookest ever, —  
     Can it know  
     All the woe  
 Of hope for what returneth never,  
 All the sorrow and the longing  
 To these hearts of ours belonging ?

Out on it ! no foolish pining  
     For the sky  
     Dims thine eye,  
 Or for the stars so calmly shining;

Like thee let this soul of mine  
 Take hue from that wherefor I long,  
 Self-stayed and high, serene and strong,  
 Not satisfied with hoping — but divine.

Violet ! dear violet !

Thy blue eyes are only wet  
 With joy and love of Him who sent thee,  
 And for the fulfilling sense  
 Of that glad obedience  
 Which made thee all that Nature meant  
 thee !

## ROSALINE

THOU look'dst on me all yesternight,  
 Thine eyes were blue, thy hair was bright  
 As when we murmured our troth-plight  
 Beneath the thick stars, Rosaline !  
 Thy hair was braided on thy head,  
 As on the day we two were wed,  
 Mine eyes scarce knew if thou wert dead,  
 But my shrunk heart knew, Rosaline !

The death-watch ticked behind the wall,  
 The blackness rustled like a pall,  
 The moaning wind did rise and fall  
 Among the bleak pines, Rosaline !  
 My heart beat thickly in mine ears:  
 The lids may shut out fleshly fears,  
 But still the spirit sees and hears,  
 Its eyes are lidless, Rosaline !

A wildness rushing suddenly,  
 A knowing some ill shape is nigh,  
 A wish for death, a fear to die,  
 Is not this vengeance, Rosaline ?  
 A loneliness that is not lone,  
 A love quite withered up and gone,  
 A strong soul ousted from its throne,  
 What wouldst thou further, Rosaline ?

'T is drear such moonless nights as these,  
 Strange sounds are out upon the breeze,  
 And the leaves shiver in the trees,  
 And then thou comest, Rosaline !  
 I seem to hear the mourners go,  
 With long black garments trailing slow,  
 And plumes anodding to and fro,  
 As once I heard them, Rosaline !

Thy shroud is all of snowy white,  
 And, in the middle of the night,  
 Thou standest moveless and upright,  
 Gazing upon me, Rosaline !

There is no sorrow in thine eyes,  
But evermore that meek surprise, —  
O God ! thy gentle spirit tries  
To deem me guiltless, Rosaline !

Above thy grave the robin sings,  
And swarms of bright and happy things  
Flit all about with sunlit wings,  
But I am cheerless, Rosaline !  
The violets in the hillock toss,  
The gravestone is o'ergrown with moss;  
For nature feels not any loss,  
But I am cheerless, Rosaline !

I did not know when thou wast dead;  
A blackbird whistling overhead  
Thrilled through my brain; I would have  
fled,

But dared not leave thee, Rosaline !  
The sun rolled down, and very soon,  
Like a great fire, the awful moon  
Rose, stained with blood, and then a swoon  
Crept chillily o'er me, Rosaline !

The stars came out; and, one by one,  
Each angel from his silver throne  
Looked down and saw what I had done:  
I dared not hide me, Rosaline !  
I crouched; I feared thy corpse would cry  
Against me to God's silent sky,  
I thought I saw the blue lips try  
To utter something, Rosaline !

I waited with a maddened grin  
To hear that voice all icy thin  
Slide forth and tell my deadly sin  
To hell and heaven, Rosaline !  
But no voice came, and then it seemed,  
That, if the very corpse had screamed,  
The sound like sunshine glad had streamed  
Through that dark stillness, Rosaline !

And then, amid the silent night,  
I screamed with horrible delight,  
And in my brain an awful light  
Did seem to crackle, Rosaline !  
It is my curse ! sweet memories fall  
From me like snow, and only all  
Of that one night, like cold worms, crawl  
My doomed heart over, Rosaline !

Why wilt thou haunt me with thine eyes,  
Wherein such blessed memories,  
Such pitying forgiveness lies,  
Than hate more bitter, Rosaline !

Woe's me ! I know that love so high  
As thine, true soul, could never die,  
And with mean clay in churchyard lie, —  
Would it might be so, Rosaline !

### A REQUIEM

Ay, pale and silent maiden,  
Cold as thou liest there,  
Thine was the sunniest nature  
That ever drew the air;  
The wildest and most wayward,  
And yet so gently kind,  
Thou seemedst but to body  
A breath of summer wind.

Into the eternal shadow  
That girds our life around,  
Into the infinite silence  
Wherewith Death's shore is bound,  
Thou hast gone forth, beloved !  
And I were mean to weep,  
That thou hast left Life's shallows,  
And dost possess the Deep.

Thou liest low and silent,  
Thy heart is cold and still,  
Thine eyes are shut forever,  
And Death hath had his will;  
He loved and would have taken,  
I loved and would have kept,  
We strove, — and he was stronger,  
And I have never wept.

Let him possess thy body,  
Thy soul is still with me,  
More sunny and more gladsome  
Than it was wont to be:  
Thy body was a fetter  
That bound me to the flesh,  
Thank God that it is broken,  
And now I live afresh !

Now I can see thee clearly;  
The dusky cloud of clay,  
That hid thy starry spirit,  
Is rent and blown away:  
To earth I give thy body,  
Thy spirit to the sky,  
I saw its bright wings growing,  
And knew that thou must fly.

Now I can love thee truly,  
For nothing comes between



The senses and the spirit,  
 The seen and the unseen;  
 Lifts the eternal shadow,  
 The silence bursts apart,  
 And the soul's boundless future  
 Is present in my heart.

## A PARABLE

WORN and footsore was the Prophet,  
 When he gained the holy hill;  
 "God has left the earth," he murmured,  
 "Here his presence lingers still.

"God of all the olden prophets,  
 Wilt thou speak with men no more?  
 Have I not as truly served thee  
 As thy chosen ones of yore?

"Hear me, guider of my fathers,  
 Lo! a humble heart is mine;  
 By thy mercy I beseech thee  
 Grant thy servant but a sign!"

Bowing then his head, he listened  
 For an answer to his prayer;  
 No loud burst of thunder followed,  
 Not a murmur stirred the air:

But the tuft of moss before him  
 Opened while he waited yet,  
 And, from out the rock's hard bosom,  
 Sprang a tender violet.

"God! I thank thee," said the Prophet;  
 "Hard of heart and blind was I,  
 Looking to the holy mountain  
 For the gift of prophecy.

"Still thou speakest with thy children  
 Freely as in eld sublime;  
 Humbleness, and love, and patience,  
 Still give empire over time.

"Had I trusted in my nature,  
 And had faith in lowly things,  
 Thou thyself wouldst then have sought me,  
 And set free my spirit's wings.

"But I looked for signs and wonders,  
 That o'er men should give me sway;  
 Thirsting to be more than mortal,  
 I was even less than clay.

"Ere I entered on my journey,  
 As I girt my loins to start,  
 Ran to me my little daughter,  
 The beloved of my heart;

"In her hand she held a flower,  
 Like to this as like may be,  
 Which, beside my very threshold,  
 She had plucked and brought to me."

## SONG

O MOONLIGHT deep and tender,  
 A year and more ago,  
 Your mist of golden splendor  
 Round my betrothal shone!

O elm-leaves dark and dewy,  
 The very same ye seem,  
 The low wind trembles through ye,  
 Ye murmur in my dream!

O river, dim with distance,  
 Flow thus forever by,  
 A part of my existence  
 Within your heart doth lie!

O stars, ye saw our meeting,  
 Two beings and one soul,  
 Two hearts so madly beating  
 To mingle and be whole!

O happy night, deliver  
 Her kisses back to me,  
 Or keep them all, and give her  
 A blissful dream of me!

## SONNETS

I

TO A. C. L.

A. C. L. was Mrs. Anna Cabot Lowell (Mrs. Charles Lowell), the wife of the eldest brother of the poet, and mother of those gallant brothers, Charles and James, who fell in the war for the union, and to whom Lowell refers in the tenth of the second series of *Biglow Papers*.

THROUGH suffering and sorrow thou hast  
 passed  
 To show us what a woman true may be:  
 They have not taken sympathy from thee,  
 Nor made thee any other than thou wast,

Save as some tree, which, in a sudden  
blast,  
Sheddeth those blossoms, that are weakly  
grown,  
Upon the air, but keepeth every one  
Whose strength gives warrant of good fruit  
at last:

So thou hast shed some blooms of gayety,  
But never one of steadfast cheerfulness;  
Nor hath thy knowledge of adversity  
Robbed thee of any faith in happiness,  
But rather cleared thine inner eyes to see  
How many simple ways there are to bless.

## II

WHAT were I, Love, if I were stripped of  
thee,

If thine eyes shut me out whereby I live,  
Thou, who unto my calmer soul dost give  
Knowledge, and Truth, and holy Mystery,  
Wherein Truth mainly lies for those who  
see

Beyond the earthly and the fugitive,  
Who in the grandeur of the soul believe,  
And only in the Infinite are free?  
Without thee I were naked, bleak, and  
bare

As yon dead cedar on the sea-cliff's brow;  
And Nature's teachings, which come to me  
now,

Common and beautiful as light and air,  
Would be as fruitless as a stream which still  
Slips through the wheel of some old ruined  
mill.

## III

I WOULD not have this perfect love of ours  
Grow from a single root, a single stem,  
Bearing no goodly fruit, but only flowers  
That idly hide life's iron diadem:

It should grow alway like that Eastern  
tree

Whose limbs take root and spread forth  
constantly;

That love for one, from which there doth  
not spring

Wide love for all, is but a worthless thing.

Not in another world, as poets prate,

Dwell we apart above the tide of things,

High floating o'er earth's clouds on faery  
wings;

But our pure love doth ever elevate

Into a holy bond of brotherhood

All earthly things, making them pure and  
good.

## IV

"FOR this true nobleness I seek in vain,  
In woman and in man I find it not;  
I almost weary of my earthly lot,  
My life-springs are dried up with burning  
pain."

Thou find'st it not? I pray thee look  
again,

Look *inward* through the depths of thine  
own soul.

How is it with thee? Art thou sound and  
whole?

Doth narrow search show thee no earthly  
stain?

BE NOBLE! and the nobleness that lies  
In other men, sleeping, but never dead,  
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own;  
Then wilt thou see it gleam in many eyes,  
Then will pure light around thy path be  
shed,

And thou wilt nevermore be sad and lone.

## V

## TO THE SPIRIT OF KEATS

GREAT soul, thou sittest with me in my  
room,

Uplifting me with thy vast, quiet eyes,  
On whose full orbs, with kindly lustre, lies  
The twilight warmth of ruddy ember-  
gloom:

Thy clear, strong tones will oft bring sud-  
den bloom

Of hope secure, to him who lonely cries,  
Wrestling with the young poet's agonies,  
Neglect and scorn, which seem a certain  
doom:

Yes! the few words which, like great  
thunder-drops,

Thy large heart down to earth shook doubt-  
fully,

Thrilled by the inward lightning of its  
might,

Serene and pure, like gushing joy of light,  
Shall track the eternal chords of Destiny,  
After the moon-led pulse of ocean stops.

## VI

GREAT Truths are portions of the soul of  
man;

Great souls are portions of Eternity;

Each drop of blood that e'er through true  
heart ran

With lofty message, ran for thee and me;

For God's law, since the starry song began,  
Hath been, and still forevermore must be,  
That every deed which shall outlast Time's  
span

Must spur the soul to be erect and free;  
Slave is no word of deathless lineage  
sprung;

Too many noble souls have thought and  
died,

Too many mighty poets lived and sung,  
And our good Saxon, from lips purified  
With martyr-fire, throughout the world  
hath rung

Too long to have God's holy cause denied.

## VII

I ASK not for those thoughts, that sudden  
leap

From being's sea, like the isle-seeming  
Kraken,

With whose great rise the ocean all is  
shaken

And a heart-tremble quivers through the  
deep;

Give me that growth which some perchance  
deem sleep,

Wherewith the steadfast coral-stems uprise,  
Which, by the toil of gathering energies,  
Their upward way into clear sunshine  
keep,

Until, by Heaven's sweetest influences,  
Slowly and slowly spreads a speck of green  
Into a pleasant island in the seas,

Where, mid tall palms, the cane-roofed  
home is seen,

And wearied men shall sit at sunset's hour,  
Hearing the leaves and loving God's dear  
power.

## VIII

## TO M. W., ON HER BIRTHDAY

MAIDEN, when such a soul as thine is born,  
The morning-stars their ancient music  
make,

And, joyful, once again their song awake,  
Long silent now with melancholy scorn;

And thou, not mindless of so blest a morn,  
By no least deed its harmony shalt break,  
But shalt to that high chime thy footsteps  
take,

Through life's most darksome passes un-  
forlorn;

Therefore from thy pure faith thou shalt  
not fall,

Therefore shalt thou be ever fair and free,  
And in thine every motion musical  
As summer air, majestic as the sea,  
A mystery to those who creep and crawl  
Through Time, and part it from Eternity.

## IX

MY Love, I have no fear that thou shouldst  
die;

Albeit I ask no fairer life than this,  
Whose numbering-clock is, still thy gentle  
kiss,

While Time and Peace with hands en-  
locked fly;

Yet care I not where in Eternity  
We live and love, well knowing that there is  
No backward step for those who feel the  
bliss

Of Faith as their most lofty yearnings  
high:

Love hath so purified my being's core,  
Meseems I scarcely should be startled,  
even,

To find, some morn, that thou hadst gone  
before;

Since, with thy love, this knowledge too  
was given,

Which each calm day doth strengthen  
more and more,

That they who love are but one step from  
Heaven.

## X

I CANNOT think that thou shouldst pass  
away,

Whose life to mine is an eternal law,  
A piece of nature that can have no flaw,  
A new and certain sunrise every day;  
But, if thou art to be another ray

About the Sun of Life, and art to live  
Free from what part of thee was fugitive,  
The debt of Love I will more fully pay,  
Not downcast with the thought of thee so  
high,

But rather raised to be a nobler man,  
And more divine in my humanity,  
As knowing that the waiting eyes which  
scan

My life are lighted by a purer being,  
And ask high, calm-browed deeds, with it  
agreeing.

## XI

THERE never yet was flower fair in vain,  
Let classic poets rhyme it as they will;  
The seasons toil that it may blow again,

And summer's heart doth feel its every ill;  
Nor is a true soul ever born for naught;  
Wherever any such hath lived and died,  
There hath been something for true freedom wrought,

Some bulwark levelled on the evil side:  
Toil on, then, Greatness! thou art in the right,

However narrow souls may call thee wrong;

Be as thou wouldst be in thine own clear sight,

And so thou shalt be in the world's erelong;  
For worldlings cannot, struggle as they may,

From man's great soul one great thought hide away.

## XII

## SUB PONDERE CRESCIT

THE hope of Truth grows stronger, day by day;

I hear the soul of Man around me waking,  
Like a great sea, its frozen fetters breaking,

And flinging up to heaven its sunlit spray,  
Tossing huge continents in scornful play,  
And crushing them, with din of grinding thunder,

That makes old emptinesses stare in wonder;

The memory of a glory passed away  
Lingers in every heart, as, in the shell,  
Resounds the bygone freedom of the sea,  
And every hour new signs of promise tell,  
That the great soul shall once again be free,  
For high, and yet more high, the murmurs swell

Of inward strife for truth and liberty.

## XIII

BELOVED, in the noisy city here,  
The thought of thee can make all turmoil cease;

Around my spirit, folds thy spirit clear  
Its still, soft arms, and circles it with peace;

There is no room for any doubt or fear  
In souls so overfilled with love's increase,  
There is no memory of the bygone year  
But growth in heart's and spirit's perfect ease:

How hath our love, half nebulous at first,

Rounded itself into a full-orbed sun!  
How have our lives and wills (as haply erst  
They were, ere this forgetfulness begun)  
Through all their earthly distances outburst,  
And melted, like two rays of light in one!

## XIV

ON READING WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS  
IN DEFENCE OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

These sonnets, XIV-XIX, when printed in  
*The Democratic Review* for May, 1842, bore  
merely the title *Sonnets*.

As the broad ocean endlessly upheaveth,  
With the majestic beating of his heart,  
The mighty tides, whereof its rightful part  
Each sea-wide bay and little weed receiveth,

So, through his soul who earnestly believeth,  
Life from the universal Heart doth flow,  
Whereby some conquest of the eternal Woe,

By instinct of God's nature, he achieveth:  
A fuller pulse of this all-powerful beauty  
Into the poet's gulf-like heart doth tide,  
And he more keenly feels the glorious duty  
Of serving Truth, despised and crucified,—  
Happy, unknowing sect or creed, to rest,  
And feel God flow forever through his breast.

## XV

## THE SAME CONTINUED

ONCE hardly in a cycle blossometh  
A flower-like soul ripe with the seeds of song,

A spirit foreordained to cope with wrong,  
Whose divine thoughts are natural as breath,

Who the old Darkness thickly scattereth  
With starry words, that shoot prevailing light

Into the deeps, and wither, with the blight  
Of serene Truth, the coward heart of Death:

Woe, if such spirit thwart its errand high,  
And mock with lies the longing soul of man!

Yet one age longer must true Culture lie,  
Soothing her bitter fetters as she can,  
Until new messages of love outstart  
At the next beating of the infinite Heart.



## XVI

## THE SAME CONTINUED

THE love of all things springs from love of one;

Wider the soul's horizon hourly grows,  
And over it with fuller glory flows  
The sky-like spirit of God; a hope begun  
In doubt and darkness 'neath a fairer sun  
Cometh to fruitage, if it be of Truth;  
And to the law of meekness, faith, and ruth,

By inward sympathy, shall all be won:  
This thou shouldst know, who, from the painted feature  
Of shifting Fashion, couldst thy brethren turn

Unto the love of ever-youthful Nature,  
And of a beauty fadeless and eterne;  
And always 't is the saddest sight to see  
An old man faithless in Humanity.

## XVII

## THE SAME CONTINUED

A POET cannot strive for despotism;  
His harp falls shattered; for it still must be  
The instinct of great spirits to be free,  
And the sworn foes of cunning barbarism:  
He who has deepest searched the wide abyss

Of that life-giving Soul which men call fate,  
Knows that to put more faith in lies and hate

Than truth and love is the true atheism:  
Upward the soul forever turns her eyes:  
The next hour always shames the hour before;

One beauty, at its highest, prophesies  
That by whose side it shall seem mean and poor;  
No Godlike thing knows aught of less and less,  
But widens to the boundless Perfectness.

## XVIII

## THE SAME CONTINUED

THEREFORE think not the Past is wise alone,

For Yesterday knows nothing of the Best,  
And thou shalt love it only as the nest  
Whence glory-winged things to Heaven have flown:

To the great Soul only are all things known;

Present and future are to her as past,  
While she in glorious madness doth forecast

That perfect bud, which seems a flower full-blown

To each new Prophet, and yet always opes  
Fuller and fuller with each day and hour,  
Heartening the soul with odor of fresh hopes,

And longings high, and gushings of wide power,

Yet never is or shall be fully blown  
Save in the forethought of the Eternal One.

## XIX

## THE SAME CONCLUDED

FAR 'yond this narrow parapet of Time,  
With eyes uplift, the poet's soul should look

Into the Endless Promise, nor should brook  
One prying doubt to shake his faith sublime;

To him the earth is ever in her prime  
And dewiness of morning; he can see  
Good lying hid, from all eternity,  
Within the teeming womb of sin and crime;

His soul should not be cramped by any bar,  
His nobleness should be so Godlike high,  
That his least deed is perfect as a star,  
His common look majestic as the sky,  
And all o'erflooded with a light from far,  
Undimmed by clouds of weak mortality.

## XX

## TO M. O. S.

Mary Orne Story, sister to William Wetmore Story, afterward married to George Ticknor Curtis.

MARY, since first I knew thee, to this hour,  
My love hath deepened, with my wiser sense

Of what in Woman is to reverence;  
Thy clear heart, fresh as e'er was forest-flower,

Still opens more to me its beauteous dower;—

But let praise hush, — Love asks no evidence

To prove itself well-placed; we know not whence

It gleans the straws that thatch its humble  
bower:

We can but say we found it in the heart,  
Spring of all sweetest thoughts, arch foe of  
blame,

Sower of flowers in the dusty mart,  
Pure vestal of the poet's holy flame, —  
This is enough, and we have done our part  
If we but keep it spotless as it came.

## XXI

OUR love is not a fading, earthly flower:  
Its winged seed dropped down from Paradise,

And, nursed by day and night, by sun and  
shower,

Doth momentarily to fresher beauty rise:  
To us the leafless autumn is not bare,  
Nor winter's rattling boughs lack lusty  
green.

Our summer hearts make summer's ful-  
ness, where

No leaf, or bud, or blossom may be seen:  
For nature's life in love's deep life doth lie,  
Love, — whose forgetfulness is beauty's  
death,

Whose mystic key these cells of Thou and I  
Into the infinite freedom openeth,  
And makes the body's dark and narrow  
grate

The wide-flung leaves of Heaven's own  
palace-gate.

## XXII

## IN ABSENCE

THESE rugged, wintry days I scarce could  
bear,

Did I not know that, in the early spring,  
When wild March winds upon their er-  
rands sing,

Thou wouldst return, bursting on this still  
air,

Like those same winds, when, startled from  
their lair,

They hunt up violets, and free swift brooks  
From icy cares, even as thy clear looks  
Bid my heart bloom, and sing, and break  
all care:

When drops with welcome rain the April  
day,

My flowers shall find their April in thine  
eyes,

Save there the rain in dreamy clouds doth  
stay,

As loath to fall out of those happy skies;  
Yet sure, my love, thou art most like to  
May,  
That comes with steady sun when April  
dies.

## XXIII

## WENDELL PHILLIPS

HE stood upon the world's broad thresh-  
old; wide

The din of battle and of slaughter rose;  
He saw God stand upon the weaker side,  
That sank in seeming loss before its foes:  
Many there were who made great haste  
and sold

Unto the cunning enemy their swords,  
He scorned their gifts of fame, and power,  
and gold,

And, underneath their soft and flowery  
words,

Heard the cold serpent hiss; therefore he  
went

And humbly joined him to the weaker  
part,

Fanatic named, and fool, yet well content  
So he could be the nearer to God's heart,  
And feel its solemn pulses sending blood  
Through all the widespread veins of end-  
less good.

## XXIV

## THE STREET

THEY pass me by like shadows, crowds on  
crowds,

Dim ghosts of men, that hover to and fro,  
Hugging their bodies round them like thin  
shrouds

Wherein their souls were buried long ago:  
They trampled on their youth, and faith,  
and love,

They cast their hope of human-kind away,  
With Heaven's clear messages they madly  
strove,

And conquered, — and their spirits turned  
to clay:

Lo! how they wander round the world,  
their grave,

Whose ever-gaping maw by such is fed,  
Gibbering at living men, and idly rave,  
"We only truly live, but ye are dead."  
Alas! poor fools, the anointed eye may  
trace

A dead soul's epitaph in every face!

## XXV

I GRIEVE not that ripe Knowledge takes  
 away  
 The charm that Nature to my childhood  
 wore,  
 For, with that insight, cometh, day by day,  
 A greater bliss than wonder was before;  
 The real doth not clip the poet's wings, —  
 To win the secret of a weed's plain heart  
 Reveals some clue to spiritual things,  
 And stumbling guess becomes firm-footed  
 art:  
 Flowers are not flowers unto the poet's  
 eyes,  
 Their beauty thrills him by an inward  
 sense;  
 He knows that outward seemings are but  
 lies,  
 Or, at the most, but earthly shadows,  
 whence  
 The soul that looks within for truth may  
 guess  
 The presence of some wondrous heavenli-  
 ness.

## XXVI

TO J. R. GIDDINGS

GIDDINGS, far rougher names than thine  
 have grown  
 Smoother than honey on the lips of men;  
 And thou shalt aye be honorably known,  
 As one who bravely used his tongue and pen,  
 As best befits a freeman, — even for those  
 To whom our Law's unblushing front de-  
 nies  
 A right to plead against the lifelong woes  
 Which are the Negro's glimpse of Free-  
 dom's skies:  
 Fear nothing, and hope all things, as the  
 Right  
 Alone may do securely; every hour  
 The thrones of Ignorance and ancient  
 Night  
 Lose somewhat of their long-usurp'd  
 power,  
 And Freedom's lightest word can make  
 them shiver  
 With a base dread that clings to them for-  
 ever.

## XXVII

I THOUGHT our love at full, but I did err;  
 Joy's wreath drooped o'er mine eyes; I  
 could not see

That sorrow in our happy world must be  
 Love's deepest spokesman and interpreter:  
 But, as a mother feels her child first stir  
 Under her heart, so felt I instantly  
 Deep in my soul another bond to thee  
 Thrill with that life we saw depart from  
 her;  
 O mother of our angel child! twice dear!  
 Death knits as well as parts, and still, I  
 wis,  
 Her tender radiance shall infold us here,  
 Even as the light, borne up by inward bliss,  
 Threads the void glooms of space without  
 a fear,  
 To print on farthest stars her pitying kiss.

## L'ENVOI

WHETHER my heart hath wiser grown or  
 not,  
 In these three years, since I to thee in-  
 scribed,  
 Mine own betrothed, the firstlings of my  
 muse, —  
 Poor windfalls of unripe experience,  
 Young buds plucked hastily by childish  
 hands  
 Not patient to await more full-blown flow-  
 ers, —  
 At least it hath seen more of life and men,  
 And pondered more, and grown a shade  
 more sad;  
 Yet with no loss of hope or settled trust  
 In the benignness of that Providence  
 Which shapes from out our elements awry  
 The grace and order that we wonder at,  
 The mystic harmony of right and wrong,  
 Both working out His wisdom and our  
 good:  
 A trust, Beloved, chiefly learned of thee,  
 Who hast that gift of patient tenderness,  
 The instinctive wisdom of a woman's heart.  
 They tell us that our land was made for  
 song,  
 With its huge rivers and sky-piercing  
 peaks,  
 Its sealike lakes and mighty cataracts,  
 Its forests vast and hoar, and prairies wide,  
 And mounds that tell of wondrous tribes  
 extinct.  
 But Poesy springs not from rocks and  
 woods;  
 Her womb and cradle are the human heart,

And she can find a nobler theme for song  
In the most loathsome man that blasts the  
sight

Than in the broad expanse of sea and shore  
Between the frozen deserts of the poles.  
All nations have their message from on  
high,

Each the messiah of some central thought,  
For the fulfilment and delight of Man:  
One has to teach that labor is divine;  
Another Freedom; and another Mind;  
And all, that God is open-eyed and just,  
The happy centre and calm heart of all.

Are, then, our woods, our mountains, and  
our streams,

Needful to teach our poets how to sing?  
O maiden rare, far other thoughts were ours,  
When we have sat by ocean's foaming  
marge,

And watched the waves leap roaring on the  
rocks,

Than young Leander and his Hero had,  
Gazing from Sestos to the other shore.  
The moon looks down and ocean worships  
her,

Stars rise and set, and seasons come and go  
Even as they did in Homer's elder time,  
But we behold them not with Grecian eyes:  
Then they were types of beauty and of  
strength,

But now of freedom, unconfined and pure,  
Subject alone to Order's higher law.

What cares the Russian serf or Southern  
slave

Though we should speak as man spake  
never yet

Of gleaming Hudson's broad magnificence,  
Or green Niagara's never-ending roar?  
Our country hath a gospel of her own  
To preach and practise before all the  
world, —

The freedom and divinity of man,  
The glorious claims of human brother-  
hood, —

Which to pay nobly, as a freeman should,  
Gains the sole wealth that will not fly  
away, —

And the soul's fealty to none but God.  
These are realities, which make the shows  
Of outward Nature, be they ne'er so grand,  
Seem small, and worthless, and contempti-  
ble.

These are the mountain-summits for our  
bards,

Which stretch far upward into heaven it-  
self,

And give such widespread and exulting  
view

Of hope, and faith, and onward destiny,  
That shrunk Parnassus to a molehill  
dwindles.

Our new Atlantis, like a morning-star,  
Silvers the mirk face of slow-yielding  
Night,

The herald of a fuller truth than yet  
Hath gleamed upon the upraised face of  
Man

Since the earth glittered in her stainless  
prime, —

Of a more glorious sunrise than of old  
Drew wondrous melodies from Memnon  
huge,

Yea, draws them still, though now he sit  
waist-deep

In the ingulfing flood of whirling sand,  
And look across the wastes of endless gray,  
Sole wreck, where once his hundred-gated  
Thebes

Pained with her mighty hum the calm,  
blue heaven:

Shall the dull stone pay grateful orisons,  
And we till noonday bar the splendor out,  
Lest it reproach and chide our sluggish  
hearts,

Warm-nestled in the down of Prejudice,  
And be content, though clad with angel-  
wings,

Close-clipped, to hop about from perch to  
perch,

In paltry cages of dead men's dead  
thoughts?

Oh, rather, like the skylark, soar and sing,  
And let our gushing songs befit the dawn  
And sunrise, and the yet unshaken dew  
Brimming the chalice of each full-blown  
hope,

Whose blithe front turns to greet the  
growing day!

Never had poets such high call before,  
Never can poets hope for higher one,  
And, if they be but faithful to their trust,  
Earth will remember them with love and joy,  
And oh, far better, God will not forget.

For he who settles Freedom's principles  
Writes the death-warrant of all tyranny;  
Who speaks the truth stabs Falsehood to  
the heart,

And his mere word makes despots tremble  
more



Than ever Brutus with his dagger could.  
 Wait for no hints from waterfalls or  
 woods,  
 Nor dream that tales of red men, brute  
 and fierce,  
 Repay the finding of this Western World,  
 Or needed half the globe to give them  
 birth:

Spirit supreme of Freedom! not for this  
 Did great Columbus tame his eagle soul  
 To jostle with the daws that perch in  
 courts;

Not for this, friendless, on an unknown sea,  
 Coping with mad waves and more mutin-  
 ous spirits,

Battled he with the dreadful ache at heart  
 Which tempts, with devilish subtleties of  
 doubt,

The hermit of that loneliest solitude,  
 The silent desert of a great New Thought;  
 Though loud Niagara were to-day struck  
 dumb,

Yet would this cataract of boiling life  
 Rush plunging on and on to endless deeps,  
 And utter thunder till the world shall  
 cease, —

A thunder worthy of the poet's song,  
 And which alone can fill it with true life.  
 The high evangel to our country granted

Could make apostles, yea, with tongues of  
 fire,

Of hearts half-darkened back again to  
 clay!

'T is the soul only that is national,  
 And he who pays true loyalty to that  
 Alone can claim the wreath of patriotism.

Beloved! if I wander far and oft  
 From that which I believe, and feel, and  
 know,

Thou wilt forgive, not with a sorrowing  
 heart,

But with a strengthened hope of better  
 things;

Knowing that I, though often blind and  
 false

To those I love, and oh, more false than  
 all

Unto myself, have been most true to thee,  
 And that whoso in one thing hath been  
 true

Can be as true in all. Therefore thy hope  
 May yet not prove unfruitful, and thy love  
 Meet, day by day, with less unworthy  
 thanks,

Whether, as now, we journey hand in hand,  
 Or, parted in the body, yet are one  
 In spirit and the love of holy things.

## MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

WHEN Lowell published his second volume, *Poems*, in 1843, he opened it with *A Legend of Brittany*, and dedicated it in the following letter to the painter, William Page: —

MY DEAR FRIEND, —

The love between us, which can now look back upon happy years of still enlarging confidence, and forward, with a sure trust in its own prophecy of yet deeper and tenderer sympathies, as long as life shall remain to us, stands in no need, I am well aware, of so poor a voucher as an Epistle Dedicatory. True, it is one of Love's chiefest charms, that it must still take special pains to be superfluous in seeking out ways to declare itself, — but for these it demands no publicity, and wishes no acknowledgment. But the admiration which one soul feels for another loses half its worth, if it let slip any opportunity of making itself heard and felt by that strange Abbot of Unreason which we call the World. For the humblest man's true admiration is no uncer-

tain oracle of the verdict of Posterity, — the unerring tribunal where Genius is at last allowed the right of trial by its peers, and to which none but sincere and real Greatness can appeal with an unwavering heart. There the false witnesses of to-day will be unable to appear, being fled to some hospitable Texas in the realms of Limbo, beyond the sphere of its jurisdiction and the summons of its apparitors.

I have never seen the works of the Great Masters of your Art, but I have studied their lives, and sure I am that no nobler, gentler, or purer spirit than yours was ever anointed by the Eternal Beauty to bear that part of her divine message which it belongs to the Great Painter to reveal. The sympathy of sister pursuits, of an agreeing artistic faith, and, yet more, of a common hope for the final destiny of man, has not been wanting to us, and now you will forgive the pride I feel in having this advantage over you, namely, of telling that admiration in public which I have never stinted to utter in private. You will believe, that, as

your winning that fadeless laurel, which you deserve, and which will one day surely be yours, can never heighten my judgment of you, so nothing that is not in your own control will ever lower it, and that I shall think as simply of you when the World's opinion has overtaken my own, at now.

As the swiftly diverging channels of Life bear wider and wider apart from us the friends who hoisted sail with us as fellow-mariners, when we cast off for the voyage, and as some,

## A LEGEND OF BRITTANY

Lowell was in high spirits when he was at work on *A Legend of Brittany*. "I am now at work," he writes to G. B. Loring, under date of June 15, 1843, "on a still longer poem [than Prometheus] in the *ottava rima*, to be the first in my forthcoming volume. I feel more and more assured every day that I shall yet do something that will keep my name (and perhaps my body) alive. My wings were never so light and strong as now."

*A Legend of Brittany* and most of the other poems in the volume which it opened belong in the category referred to by him in his *Prefatory Note*, of pieces which he "would gladly suppress or put into the Coventry of smaller print in an appendix." Their value is chiefly in the record they contain of his poetic development and his temperament.

### PART FIRST

#### I

FAIR as a summer dream was Margaret,  
Such dream as in a poet's soul might  
start,  
Musing of old loves while the moon doth  
set:  
Her hair was not more sunny than her  
heart,  
Though like a natural golden coronet  
It circled her dear head with careless  
art,  
Mocking the sunshine, that would fain  
have lent  
To its frank grace a richer ornament.

#### II

His loved one's eyes could poet ever speak,  
So kind, so dewy, and so deep were  
hers,—  
But, while he strives, the choicest phrase,  
too weak,  
Their glad reflection in his spirit blurs;

even, who are yet side by side with us, no longer send back to us an answering cheer, we are drawn the more closely to those that remain, and I would fain hope that this joining of our names will always be one of our not least happy memories.

And so, with all best wishes,

I remain always your friend,

J. R. LOWELL.

CAMBRIDGE, December 15, 1843.

As one may see a dream dissolve and  
break

Out of his grasp when he to tell it stirs,  
Like that sad Dryad doomed no more to  
bless

The mortal who revealed her loveliness.

#### III

She dwelt forever in a region bright,  
Peopled with living fancies of her own,  
Where naught could come but visions of  
delight,

Far, far aloof from earth's eternal moan:  
A summer cloud thrilled through with rosy  
light,

Floating beneath the blue sky all alone,  
Her spirit wandered by itself, and won  
A golden edge from some unsetting sun.

#### IV

The heart grows richer that its lot is poor,  
God blesses want with larger sympa-  
thies,

Love enters gladliest at the humble door,  
And makes the cot a palace with his  
eyes;

So Margaret's heart a softer beauty wore,  
And grew in gentleness and patience  
wise,

For she was but a simple herdsman's child,  
A lily chance-sown in the rugged wild.

#### V

There was no beauty of the wood or field  
But she its fragrant bosom-secret knew,  
Nor any but to her would freely yield  
Some grace that in her soul took root  
and grew:

Nature to her shone as but now revealed,  
All rosy-fresh with innocent morning  
dew,

And looked into her heart with dim, sweet  
eyes

That left it full of sylvan memories.

## VI

Oh, what a face was hers to brighten light,  
 And give back sunshine with an added  
 glow,  
 To wile each moment with a fresh delight,  
 And part of memory's best contentment  
 grow !  
 Oh, how her voice, as with an inmate's  
 right,  
 Into the strangest heart would welcome  
 go,  
 And make it sweet, and ready to become  
 Of white and gracious thoughts the chosen  
 home !

## VII

None looked upon her but he straightway  
 thought  
 Of all the greenest depths of country  
 cheer,  
 And into each one's heart was freshly  
 brought  
 What was to him the sweetest time of  
 year,  
 So was her every look and motion fraught  
 With out-of-door delights and forest  
 lere;  
 Not the first violet on a woodland lea  
 Seemed a more visible gift of Spring than  
 she.

## VIII

Is love learned only out of poets' books ?  
 Is there not somewhat in the dropping  
 flood,  
 And in the nunneries of silent nooks,  
 And in the murmured longing of the  
 wood,  
 That could make Margaret dream of love-  
 lorn looks,  
 And stir a thrilling mystery in her blood  
 More trembly secret than Aurora's tear  
 Shed in the bosom of an eglatere ?

## IX

Full many a sweet forewarning hath the  
 mind,  
 Full many a whispering of vague desire,  
 Ere comes the nature destined to unbind  
 Its virgin zone, and all its deeps in-  
 spire,—  
 Low stirrings in the leaves, before the wind  
 Wake all the green strings of the forest  
 lyre,

Faint heatings in the calyx, ere the rose  
 Its warm voluptuous breast doth all un-  
 close.

## X

Long in its dim recesses pines the spirit,  
 Wildered and dark, despairingly alone;  
 Though many a shape of beauty wander  
 near it,  
 And many a wild and half-remembered  
 tone  
 Tremble from the divine abyss to cheer it,  
 Yet still it knows that there is only one  
 Before whom it can kneel and tribute bring,  
 At once a happy vassal and a king.

## XI

To feel a want, yet scarce know what it is,  
 To seek one nature that is always new,  
 Whose glance is warmer than another's  
 kiss,  
 Whom we can bare our inmost beauty to,  
 Nor feel deserted afterwards,—for this  
 But with our destined co-mate we can  
 do,—  
 Such longing instinct fills the mighty scope  
 Of the young soul with one mysterious  
 hope.

## XII

So Margaret's heart grew brimming with  
 the lore  
 Of love's enticing secrets; and although  
 She had found none to cast it down before,  
 Yet oft to Fane's chapel she would go  
 To pay her vows—and count the rosary  
 o'er  
 Of her love's promised graces:—haply  
 so  
 Miranda's hope had pictured Ferdinand  
 Long ere the gaunt wave tossed him on the  
 strand.

## XIII

A new-made star that swims the lonely  
 gloom,  
 Unwedded yet and longing for the sun,  
 Whose beams, the bride-gifts of the lavish  
 groom,  
 Blithely to crown the virgin planet run,  
 Her being was, watching to see the bloom  
 Of love's fresh sunrise roofing one by  
 one  
 Its clouds with gold, a triumph-arch to be  
 For him who came to hold her heart in fee.

## XIV

Not far from Margaret's cottage dwelt a knight

Of the proud Templars, a sworn celibate,  
Whose heart in secret fed upon the light  
And dew of her ripe beauty, through the grate

Of his close vow catching what gleams he might

Of the free heaven, and cursing all too late  
The cruel faith whose black walls hemmed him in

And turned life's crowning bliss to deadly sin.

## XV

For he had met her in the wood by chance,  
And, having drunk her beauty's wildering spell,

His heart shook like the pennon of a lance  
That quivers in a breeze's sudden swell,  
And thenceforth, in a close-infolded trance,  
From mistily golden deep to deep he fell;  
Till earth did waver and fade far away  
Beneath the hope in whose warm arms he lay.

## XVI

A dark, proud man he was, whose half-blown youth

Had shed its blossoms even in opening,  
Leaving a few that with more winning ruth  
Trembling around grave manhood's stem might cling,

More sad than cheery, making, in good sooth,

Like the fringed gentian, a late autumn spring:

A twilight nature, braided light and gloom,  
A youth half-smiling by an open tomb.

## XVII

Fair as an angel, who yet inly wore

A wrinkled heart foreboding his near fall;

Who saw him alway wished to know him more,

As if he were some fate's defiant thrall  
And nursed a dreaded secret at his core;

Little he loved, but power the most of all,  
And that he seemed to scorn, as one who knew

By what foul paths men choose to crawl thereto.

## XVIII

He had been noble, but some great deceit  
Had turned his better instinct to a vice:  
He strove to think the world was all a cheat,

That power and fame were cheap at any price,

That the sure way of being shortly great  
Was even to play life's game with loaded dice,

Since he had tried the honest play and found

That vice and virtue differed but in sound.

## XIX

Yet Margaret's sight redeemed him for a space

From his own thralldom; man could never be

A hypocrite when first such maiden grace  
Smiled in upon his heart; the agony  
Of wearing all day long a lying face

Fell lightly from him, and, a moment free,

Erect with wakened faith his spirit stood  
And scorned the weakness of his demon-mood.

## XX

Like a sweet wind-harp to him was her thought,

Which would not let the common air come near,

Till from its dim enchantment it had caught  
A musical tenderness that brimmed his ear

With sweetness more ethereal than aught  
Save silver-dropping snatches that whilere

Rained down from some sad angel's faithful harp

To cool her fallen lover's anguish sharp.

## XXI

Deep in the forest was a little dell

High overarched with the leafy sweep  
Of a broad oak, through whose gnarled roots there fell

A slender rill that sung itself to sleep,  
Where its continuous toil had scooped a well  
To please the fairy folk; breathlessly deep  
The stillness was, save when the dreaming brook

From its small urn a drizzly murmur shook.



## XXII

The wooded hills sloped upward all around  
With gradual rise, and made an even rim,  
So that it seemed a mighty casque un-  
bound

From some huge Titan's brow to lighten  
him,

Ages ago, and left upon the ground,  
Where the slow soil had mossed it to the  
brim,

Till after countless centuries it grew  
Into this dell, the haunt of noontide dew.

## XXIII

Dim vistas, sprinkled o'er with sun-flecked  
green,

Wound through the thickset trunks on  
every side,

And, toward the west, in fancy might be  
seen

A Gothic window in its blazing pride,  
When the low sun, two arching elms be-  
tween,

Lit up the leaves beyond, which, autumn-  
dyed

With lavish hues, went into splendor start,  
Shaming the labored panes of richest art.

## XXIV

Here, leaning once against the old oak's  
trunk,

Mordred, for such was the young Tem-  
plar's name,

Saw Margaret come; unseen, the falcon  
shrunken

From the meek dove; sharp thrills of  
tingling flame

Made him forget that he was vowed a  
monk,

And all the outworks of his pride o'er-  
came:

Flooded he seemed with bright delicious  
pain,

As if a star had burst within his brain.

## XXV

Such power hath beauty and frank inno-  
cence:

A flower bloomed forth, that sunshine  
glad to bless,

Even from his love's long leafless stem;  
the sense

Of exile from Hope's happy realm grew  
less,

And thoughts of childish peace, he knew  
not whence,

Thronged round his heart with many an  
old caress,

Melting the frost there into pearly dew  
That mirrored back his nature's morning-  
blue.

## XXVI

She turned and saw him, but she felt no  
dread,

Her purity, like adamant mail,  
Did so encircle her; and yet her head

She drooped, and made her golden hair  
her veil,

Through which a glow of rosiest lustre  
spread,

Then faded, and anon she stood all pale,  
As snow o'er which blush of northern-light  
Suddenly reddens, and as soon grows  
white.

## XXVII

She thought of Tristrem and of Lancelot,

Of all her dreams, and of kind fairies'  
might,

And how that dell was deemed a haunted  
spot,

Until there grew a mist before her sight,  
And where the present was she half forgot,  
Borne backward through the realms of  
old delight,—

Then, starting up awake, she would have  
gone,

Yet almost wished it might not be alone.

## XXVIII

How they went home together through the  
wood,

And how all life seemed focussed into one  
Thought-dazzling spot that set ablaze the  
blood,

What need to tell? Fit language there  
is none

For the heart's deepest things. Who ever  
wooded

As in his boyish hope he would have done?  
For, when the soul is fullest, the hushed  
tongue

Voicelessly trembles like a lute unstrung.

## XXIX

But all things carry the heart's messages

And know it not, nor doth the heart well  
know,

But Nature hath her will; even as the  
bees,

Blithe go-betweens, fly singing to and fro  
With the fruit-quickenings pollen; — hard  
if these

Found not some all unthought-of way to  
show

Their secret each to each; and so they did,  
And one heart's flower-dust into the other  
slid.

## XXX

Young hearts are free; the selfish world it  
is

That turns them miserly and cold as  
stone,

And makes them clutch their fingers on  
the bliss

Which but in giving truly is their  
own; —

She had no dreams of barter, asked not  
his,

But gave hers freely as she would have  
thrown

A rose to him, or as that rose gives forth  
Its generous fragrance, thoughtless of its  
worth.

## XXXI

Her summer nature felt a need to bless,

And a like longing to be blest again;

So, from her sky-like spirit, gentleness

Dropt ever like a sunlit fall of rain,

And his beneath drank in the bright caress

As thirstily as would a parched plain,

That long hath watched the showers of  
sloping gray

For ever, ever, falling far away.

## XXXII

How should she dream of ill? the heart  
filled quite

With sunshine, like the shepherd's-clock  
at noon,

Closes its leaves around its warm delight;

Whate'er in life is harsh or out of tune

Is all shut out, no boding shade of blight

Can pierce the opiate ether of its swoon:

Love is but blind as thoughtful justice is,

But naught can be so wanton-blind as bliss.

## XXXIII

All beauty and all life he was to her;

She questioned not his love, she only  
knew

That she loved him, and not a pulse could  
stir

In her whole frame but quivered through  
and through

With this glad thought, and was a minister

To do him fealty and service true,

Like golden ripples hasting to the land

To wreck their freight of sunshine on the  
strand.

## XXXIV

O dewy dawn of love! O hopes that are  
Hung high, like the cliff-swallow's peril-  
ous nest,

Most like to fall when fullest, and that  
jar

With every heavier billow! O unrest  
Than balmy deeps of quiet sweeter far!

How did ye triumph now in Margaret's  
breast,

Making it readier to shrink and start  
Than quivering gold of the pond-lily's  
heart!

## XXXV

Here let us pause: oh, would the soul  
might ever

Achieve its immortality in youth,  
When nothing yet hath damped its high  
endeavor

After the starry energy of truth!

Here let us pause, and for a moment sever

This gleam of sunshine from the sad  
unruth

That sometime comes to all, for it is good  
To lengthen to the last a sunny mood.

## PART SECOND

## I

As one who, from the sunshine and the  
green,

Enters the solid darkness of a cave,  
Nor knows what precipice or pit unseen

May yawn before him with its sudden  
grave,

And, with hushed breath, doth often for-  
ward lean,

Dreaming he hears the plashing of a  
wave

Dimly below, or feels a damper air  
From out some dreary chasm, he knows  
not where;

## II

So, from the sunshine and the green of love,

We enter on our story's darker part;  
And, though the horror of it well may move

An impulse of repugnance in the heart,  
Yet let us think, that, as there's naught above

The all-embracing atmosphere of Art,  
So also there is naught that falls below  
Her generous reach, though grimed with guilt and woe.

## III

Her fittest triumph is to show that good  
Lurks in the heart of evil evermore,  
That love, though scorned, and outcast,  
and withstood,

Can without end forgive, and yet have store;  
God's love and man's are of the selfsame blood,

And He can see that always at the door  
Of foulest hearts the angel-nature yet  
Knocks to return and cancel all its debt.

## IV

It ever is weak falsehood's destiny  
That her thick mask turns crystal to let through

The unsuspecting eyes of honesty;  
But Margaret's heart was too sincere  
and true

Aught but plain truth and faithfulness to see,

And Mordred's for a time a little grew  
To be like hers, won by the mild reproof  
Of those kind eyes that kept all doubt aloof.

## V

Full oft they met, as dawn and twilight meet

In northern climes; she full of growing day

As he of darkness, which before her feet  
Shrank gradual, and faded quite away,  
Soon to return; for power had made love sweet

To him, and, when his will had gained full sway,

The taste began to pall; for never power  
Can sate the hungry soul beyond an hour.

## VI

He fell as doth the tempter ever fall,  
Even in the gaining of his loathsome end;

God doth not work as man works, but makes all

The crooked paths of ill to goodness tend;

Let him judge Margaret! If to be the thrall

Of love, and faith too generous to defend  
Its very life from him she loved, be sin,  
What hope of grace may the seducer win?

## VII

Grim-hearted world, that look'st with Le-vite eyes

On those poor fallen by too much faith in man,

She that upon thy freezing threshold lies,  
Starved to more sinning by thy savage ban,

Seeking that refuge because foulest vice  
More godlike than thy virtue is, whose span

Shuts out the wretched only, is more free  
To enter heaven than thou shalt ever be!

## VIII

Thou wilt not let her wash thy dainty feet  
With such salt things as tears, or with rude hair

Dry them, soft Pharisee, that sit'st at meat  
With him who made her such, and speak'st him fair,

Leaving God's wandering lamb the while to bleat

Unheeded, shivering in the pitiless air:  
Thou hast made prisoned virtue show more wan

And haggard than a vice to look upon.

## IX

Now many months flew by, and weary grew

To Margaret the sight of happy things;  
Blight fell on all her flowers, instead of dew;

Shut round her heart were now the joyous wings

Wherewith it wont to soar; yet not untrue,

Though tempted much, her woman's nature clings

To its first pure belief, and with sad eyes  
Looks backward o'er the gate of Paradise.

## X

And so, though altered Mordred came less  
off,

And winter frowned where spring had  
laughed before

In his strange eyes, yet half her sadness  
doffed,

And in her silent patience loved him  
more:

Sorrow had made her soft heart yet more  
soft,

And a new life within her own she bore  
Which made her tenderer, as she felt it  
move

Beneath her breast, a refuge for her love.

## XI

This babe, she thought, would surely bring  
him back,

And be a bond forever them between;  
Before its eyes the sullen tempest-rack

Would fade, and leave the face of heaven  
serene;

And love's return doth more than fill the  
lack,

Which in his absence withered the heart's  
green:

And yet a dim foreboding still would flit  
Between her and her hope to darken it.

## XII

She could not figure forth a happy fate,

Even for this life from heaven so newly  
come;

The earth must needs be doubly desolate

To him scarce parted from a fairer  
home:

Such boding heavier on her bosom sate

One night, as, standing in the twilight  
gloom,

She strained her eyes beyond that dizzy  
verge

At whose foot faintly breaks the future's  
surge.

## XIII

Poor little spirit ! nought but shame and woe

Nurse the sick heart whose lifeblood  
nurses thine:

Yet not those only ; love hath triumphed so,

As for thy sake makes sorrow more  
divine:

And yet, though thou be pure, the world is  
foe

To purity, if born in such a shrine;  
And, having trampled it for struggling  
thence,

Smiles to itself, and calls it Providence.

## XIV

As thus she mused, a shadow seemed to  
rise

From out her thought, and turn to dreari-  
ness

All blissful hopes and sunny memories,

And the quick blood would curdle up  
and press

About her heart, which seemed to shut its  
eyes

And hush itself, as who with shuddering  
guess

Harks through the gloom and dreads e'en  
now to feel

Through his hot breast the icy slide of  
steel.

## XV

But, at that heart-beat, while in dread she  
was,

In the low wind the honeysuckles gleam,  
A dewy thrill flits through the heavy  
grass,

And, looking forth, she saw, as in a  
dream,

Within the wood the moonlight's shadowy  
mass:

Night's starry heart yearning to hers  
doth seem,

And the deep sky, full-hearted with the  
moon,

Folds round her all the happiness of June.

## XVI

What fear could face a heaven and earth  
like this ?

What silveriest cloud could hang 'neath  
such a sky ?

A tide of wondrous and unwonted bliss

Rolls back through all her pulses sud-  
denly,

As if some seraph, who had learned to  
kiss

From the fair daughters of the world  
gone by,

Had wedded so his fallen light with hers,  
Such sweet, strange joy through soul and  
body stirs.



## XVII

Now seek we Mordred: he who did not fear  
 The crime, yet fears the latent consequence:  
 If it should reach a brother Templar's ear,  
 It haply might be made a good pretence  
 To cheat him of the hope he held most dear;  
 For he had spared no thought's or deed's expense,  
 That by and by might help his wish to clip  
 Its darling bride, — the high grandmaster-ship.

## XVIII

The apathy, ere a crime resolved is done,  
 Is scarce less dreadful than remorse for crime;  
 By no allurements can the soul be won  
 From brooding o'er the weary creep of time:  
 Mordred stole forth into the happy sun,  
 Striving to hum a scrap of Breton rhyme,  
 But the sky struck him speechless, and he tried  
 In vain to summon up his callous pride.

## XIX

In the courtyard a fountain leaped away,  
 A Triton blowing jewels through his shell  
 Into the sunshine; Mordred turned away,  
 Weary because the stone face did not tell  
 Of weariness, nor could he bear to-day,  
 Heartsick, to hear the patient sink and swell  
 Of winds among the leaves, or golden bees  
 Drowsily humming in the orange-trees.

## XX

All happy sights and sounds now came to him  
 Like a reproach: he wandered far and wide,  
 Following the lead of his unquiet whim,  
 But still there went a something at his side  
 That made the cool breeze hot, the sunshine dim;  
 It would not flee, it could not be defied,  
 He could not see it, but he felt it there,  
 By the damp chill that crept among his hair.

## XXI

Day wore at last; the evening-star arose,  
 And throbbing in the sky grew red and set;  
 Then with a guilty, wavering step he goes  
 To the hid nook where they so oft had met  
 In happier season, for his heart well knows  
 That he is sure to find poor Margaret  
 Watching and waiting there with love-lorn breast  
 Around her young dream's rudely scattered nest.

## XXII

Why follow here that grim old chronicle  
 Which counts the dagger-strokes and drops of blood?  
 Enough that Margaret by his mad steel fell,  
 Unmoved by murder from her trusting mood,  
 Smiling on him as Heaven smiles on Hell,  
 With a sad love, remembering when he stood  
 Not fallen yet, the unsealer of her heart,  
 Of all her holy dreams the holiest part.

## XXIII

His crime complete, scarce knowing what he did,  
 (So goes the tale,) beneath the altar there  
 In the high church the stiffening corpse he hid,  
 And then, to 'scape that suffocating air,  
 Like a scared ghoul out of the porch he slid;  
 But his strained eyes saw blood-spots everywhere,  
 And ghastly faces thrust themselves between  
 His soul and hopes of peace with blasting mien.

## XXIV

His heart went out within him like a spark  
 Dropt in the sea; wherever he made bold  
 To turn his eyes, he saw, all stiff and stark,  
 Pale Margaret lying dead; the lavish gold  
 Of her loose hair seemed in the cloudy dark  
 To spread a glory, and a thousand-fold

More strangely pale and beautiful she  
grew:  
Her silence stabbed his conscience through  
and through.

## XXV

Or visions of past days, — a mother's eyes  
That smiled down on the fair boy at her  
knee,  
Whose happy upturned face to hers re-  
plies, —  
He saw sometimes: or Margaret mourn-  
fully  
Gazed on him full of doubt, as one who  
tries  
To crush belief that does love injury;  
Then she would wring her hands, but soon  
again  
Love's patience glimmered out through  
cloudy pain.

## XXVI

Meanwhile he dared not go and steal away  
The silent, dead-cold witness of his sin;  
He had not feared the life, but that dull  
clay,  
Those open eyes that showed the death  
within,  
Would surely stare him mad; yet all the  
day  
A dreadful impulse, whence his will could  
win  
No refuge, made him linger in the aisle,  
Freezing with his wan look each greeting  
smile.

## XXVII

Now, on the second day there was to be  
A festival in church: from far and near  
Came flocking in the sunburnt peasantry,  
And knights and dames with stately an-  
tique cheer,  
Blazing with pomp, as if all faërie  
Had emptied her quaint halls, or, as it  
were,  
The illuminated marge of some old book,  
While we were gazing, life and motion took.

## XXVIII

When all were entered, and the roving eyes  
Of all were stayed, some upon faces  
bright,  
Some on the priests, some on the traceries  
That decked the slumber of a marble  
knight,

And all the rustlings over that arise  
From recognizing tokens of delight,  
When friendly glances meet, — then silent  
ease  
Spread o'er the multitude by slow degrees.

## XXIX

Then swelled the organ: up through choir  
and nave  
The music trembled with an inward thrill  
Of bliss at its own grandeur: wave on wave  
Its flood of mellow thunder rose, until  
The hushed air shivered with the throb it  
gave,  
Then, poising for a moment, it stood still,  
And sank and rose again, to burst in spray  
That wandered into silence far away.

## XXX

Like to a mighty heart the music seemed,  
That yearns with melodies it cannot  
speak,  
Until, in grand despair of what it dreamed,  
In the agony of effort it doth break,  
Yet triumphs breaking; on it rushed and  
streamed  
And wantoned in its might, as when a  
lake,  
Long pent among the mountains, bursts its  
walls  
And in one crowding gush leaps forth and  
falls.

## XXXI

Deeper and deeper shudders shook the air,  
As the huge bass kept gathering heavily,  
Like thunder when it rouses in its lair,  
And with its hoarse growl shakes the low-  
hung sky,  
It grew up like a darkness everywhere,  
Filling the vast cathedral; — suddenly,  
From the dense mass a boy's clear treble  
broke  
Like lightning, and the full-toned choir  
awoke.

## XXXII

Through gorgeous windows shone the sun  
aslant,  
Brimming the church with gold and pur-  
ple mist,  
Meet atmosphere to bosom that rich chant,  
Where fifty voices in one strand did twist  
Their varicolored tones, and left no want  
To the delighted soul, which sank abyssed

In the warm music cloud, while, far below,  
The organ heaved its surges to and fro.

## XXXIII

As if a lark should suddenly drop dead  
While the blue air yet trembled with its song,  
So snapped at once that music's golden thread,  
Struck by a nameless fear that leapt along  
From heart to heart, and like a shadow spread  
With instantaneous shiver through the throng,  
So that some glanced behind, as half aware  
A hideous shape of dread were standing there.

## XXXIV

As when a crowd of pale men gather round,  
Watching an eddy in the leaden deep,  
From which they deem the body of one drowned  
Will be cast forth, from face to face doth creep  
An eager dread that holds all tongues fast bound  
Until the horror, with a ghastly leap,  
Starts up, its dead blue arms stretched aimlessly,  
Heaved with the swinging of the careless sea, —

## XXXV

So in the faces of all these there grew,  
As by one impulse, a dark, freezing awe,  
Which with a fearful fascination drew  
All eyes toward the altar; damp and raw  
The air grew suddenly, and no man knew  
Whether perchance his silent neighbor saw  
The dreadful thing which all were sure would rise  
To scare the strained lids wider from their eyes.

## XXXVI

The incense trembled as it upward sent  
Its slow, uncertain thread of wandering blue,  
As 't were the only living element  
In all the church, so deep the stillness grew;

It seemed one might have heard it, as it went,  
Give out an audible rustle, curling through  
The midnight silence of that awestruck air,  
More hushed than death, though so much life was there.

## XXXVII

Nothing they saw, but a low voice was heard  
Threading the ominous silence of that fear,  
Gentle and terrorless as if a bird,  
Wakened by some volcano's glare, should cheer  
The murk air with his song; yet every word  
In the cathedral's farthest arch seemed near,  
As if it spoke to every one apart,  
Like the clear voice of conscience in each heart.

## XXXVIII

"O Rest, to weary hearts thou art most dear!  
O Silence, after life's bewildering din,  
Thou art most welcome, whether in the sear  
Days of our age thou comest, or we win  
Thy poppy-wreath in youth! then wherefore here  
Linger I yet, once free to enter in  
At that wished gate which gentle Death doth ope,  
Into the boundless realm of strength and hope?"

## XXXIX

"Think not in death my love could ever cease;  
If thou wast false, more need there is for me  
Still to be true; that slumber were not peace,  
If 't were unvisited with dreams of thee:  
And thou hadst never heard such words as these,  
Save that in heaven I must forever be  
Most comfortless and wretched, seeing this  
Our unbaptized babe shut out from bliss.

## XL

"This little spirit with imploring eyes  
Wanders alone the dreary wild of space;

The shadow of his pain forever lies  
 Upon my soul in this new dwelling-  
 place;  
 His loneliness makes me in Paradise  
 More lonely, and, unless I see his face,  
 Even here for grief could I lie down and  
 die,  
 Save for my curse of immortality.

## XLI

"World after world he sees around him  
 swim  
 Crowded with happy souls, that take no  
 heed  
 Of the sad eyes that from the night's faint  
 rim  
 Gaze sick with longing on them as they  
 speed  
 With golden gates, that only shut on him;  
 And shapes sometimes from hell's  
 abysses freed  
 Flap darkly by him, with enormous sweep  
 Of wings that roughen wide the pitchy  
 deep.

## XLII

"I am a mother, — spirits do not shake  
 This much of earth from them, — and I  
 must pine  
 Till I can feel his little hands, and take  
 His weary head upon this heart of mine;  
 And, might it be, full gladly for his sake  
 Would I this solitude of bliss resign  
 And be shut out of heaven to dwell with  
 him  
 Forever in that silence drear and dim.

## XLIII

"I strove to hush my soul, and would not  
 speak  
 At first, for thy dear sake; a woman's love  
 Is mighty, but a mother's heart is weak,  
 And by its weakness overcomes; I strove  
 To smother bitter thoughts with patience  
 meek,  
 But still in the abyss my soul would rove,  
 Seeking my child, and drove me here to  
 claim  
 The rite that gives him peace in Christ's  
 dear name.

## XLIV

"I sit and weep while blessed spirits sing;  
 I can but long and pine the while they  
 praise,

And, leaning o'er the wall of heaven, I  
 fling  
 My voice to where I deem my infant  
 strays,  
 Like a robbed bird that cries in vain to  
 bring  
 Her nestlings back beneath her wings'  
 embrace;  
 But still he answers not, and I but know  
 That heaven and earth are both alike in  
 woe."

## XLV

Then the pale priests, with ceremony due,  
 Baptized the child within its dreadful  
 tomb  
 Beneath that mother's heart, whose instinct  
 true  
 Star-like had battled down the triple  
 gloom  
 Of sorrow, love, and death: young maidens,  
 too,  
 Strewed the pale corpse with many a  
 milkwhite bloom,  
 And parted the bright hair, and on the  
 breast  
 Crossed the unconscious hands in sign of  
 rest.

## XLVI

Some said, that, when the priest had  
 sprinkled o'er  
 The consecrated drops, they seemed to  
 hear  
 A sigh, as of some heart from travail sore  
 Released, and then two voices singing  
 clear,  
*Misereatur Deus*, more and more  
 Fading far upward, and their ghastly  
 fear  
 Fell from them with that sound, as bodies  
 fall  
 From souls upspringing to celestial hall.

## PROMETHEUS

In a letter to G. B. Loring, dated June 15, 1843, Lowell writes: "I have been very happy for the last day or two in writing a long poem in blank verse on Prometheus, the Greek archetype of St. Simeon Stylites, the first reformer and locofoco of the Greek Mythology. It will be quite worth your while to read it when it is printed. I hope to see it in the July number of the *Democratic Review*, but fear it was too



late, having only been sent on this morning. It is the longest and best poem I have ever written, and overrunning with true radicalism and antislavery. I think that it will open the eyes of some folk and make them think that I am a poet, whatever they may say."

After the appearance of the poem, he regrets the absence of any public notice, and acknowledges thus an appreciative letter from his friend Charles F. Briggs: "Although such great names as Goethe, Byron, and Shelley have all handled the subject in modern times, you will find that I have looked at it from a somewhat new point of view. I have made it *radical*, and I believe that no poet in this age can write much that is good unless he give himself up to this tendency. For radicalism has now for the first time taken a distinctive and acknowledged shape of its own. So much of its spirit as poets in former ages have attained (and from their purer organization they could not fail of some) was by instinct rather than by reason. It has never till now been seen to be one of the two great wings that upbear the universe."

ONE after one the stars have risen and set,  
Sparkling upon the hoarfrost on my chain:  
The Bear, that prowled all night about the fold  
Of the North-star, hath shrunk into his den,  
Scared by the blithesome footsteps of the Dawn,  
Whose blushing smile floods all the Orient;  
And now bright Lucifer grows less and less,  
Into the heaven's blue quiet deep-withdrawn.  
Sunless and starless all, the desert sky  
Arches above me, empty as this heart  
For ages hath been empty of all joy,  
Except to brood upon its silent hope,  
As o'er its hope of day the sky doth now.  
All night have I heard voices: deeper yet  
The deep low breathing of the silence grew,  
While all about, muffled in awe, there stood  
Shadows, or forms, or both, clear-felt at heart,  
But, when I turned to front them, far along  
Only a shudder through the midnight ran,  
And the dense stillness walled me closer round.  
But still I heard them wander up and down  
That solitude, and flappings of dusk wings  
Did mingle with them, whether of those hags  
Let slip upon me once from Hades deep,

Or of yet direr torments, if such be,  
I could but guess; and then toward me came  
A shape as of a woman: very pale  
It was, and calm; its cold eyes did not move,  
And mine moved not, but only stared on them.  
Their fixed awe went through my brain like ice;  
A skeleton hand seemed clutching at my heart,  
And a sharp chill, as if a dank night fog  
Suddenly closed me in, was all I felt:  
And then, methought, I heard a freezing sigh,  
A long, deep, shivering sigh, as from blue lips  
Stiffening in death, close to mine ear. I thought  
Some doom was close upon me, and I looked  
And saw the red moon through the heavy mist,  
Just setting, and it seemed as it were falling,  
Or reeling to its fall, so dim and dead  
And palsy-struck it looked. Then all sounds merged  
Into the rising surges of the pines,  
Which, leagues below me, clothing the gaunt loins  
Of ancient Caucasus with hairy strength,  
Sent up a murmur in the morning wind,  
Sad as the wail that from the populous earth  
All day and night to high Olympus soars,  
Fit incense to thy wicked throne, O Jove!

Thy hated name is tossed once more in scorn  
From off my lips, for I will tell thy doom.  
And are these tears? Nay, do not triumph, Jove!  
They are wrung from me but by the agonies  
Of prophecy, like those sparse drops which fall  
From clouds in travail of the lightning, when  
The great wave of the storm high-curved and black  
Rolls steadily onward to its thunderous break.  
Why art thou made a god of, thou poor type

Of anger, and revenge, and cunning force ?  
 True Power was never born of brutish  
 Strength,  
 Nor sweet Truth suckled at the shaggy  
 dugs  
 Of that old she-wolf. Are thy thunder-  
 bolts,  
 That quell the darkness for a space, so  
 strong  
 As the prevailing patience of meek Light,  
 Who, with the invincible tenderness of  
 peace,  
 Wins it to be a portion of herself ?  
 Why art thou made a god of, thou, who  
 hast  
 The never-sleeping terror at thy heart,  
 That birthright of all tyrants, worse to bear  
 Than this thy ravening bird on which I  
 smile ?  
 Thou swear'st to free me, if I will unfold  
 What kind of doom it is whose omen flits  
 Across thy heart, as o'er a troop of doves  
 The fearful shadow of the kite. What  
 need  
 To know that truth whose knowledge can-  
 not save ?  
 Evil its errand hath, as well as Good;  
 When thine is finished, thou art known no  
 more:  
 There is a higher purity than thou,  
 And higher purity is greater strength;  
 Thy nature is thy doom, at which thy heart  
 Trembles behind the thick wall of thy  
 might.  
 Let man but hope, and thou art straight-  
 way chilled  
 With thought of that drear silence and deep  
 night  
 Which, like a dream, shall swallow thee  
 and thine:  
 Let man but will, and thou art god no  
 more,  
 More capable of ruin than the gold  
 And ivory that image thee on earth.  
 He who hurled down the monstrous Titan-  
 brood  
 Blinded with lightnings, with rough thun-  
 ders stunned,  
 Is weaker than a simple human thought.  
 My slender voice can shake thee, as the  
 breeze,  
 That seems but apt to stir a maiden's hair,  
 Sways huge Oceanus from pole to pole;  
 For I am still Prometheus, and foreknow  
 In my wise heart the end and doom of all.

Yes, I am still Prometheus, wiser grown  
 By years of solitude, — that holds apart  
 The past and future, giving the soul room  
 To search into itself, — and long commune  
 With this eternal silence; — more a god,  
 In my long-suffering and strength to meet  
 With equal front the direst shafts of fate,  
 Than thou in thy faint-hearted despotism,  
 Girt with thy baby-toys of force and wrath.  
 Yes, I am that Prometheus who brought  
 down  
 The light to man, which thou, in selfish  
 fear,  
 Hadst to thyself usurped, — his by sole  
 right,  
 For Man hath right to all save Tyranny, —  
 And which shall free him yet from thy frail  
 throne.  
 Tyrants are but the spawn of Ignorance,  
 Begotten by the slaves they trample on,  
 Who, could they win a glimmer of the  
 light,  
 And see that Tyranny is always weakness,  
 Or Fear with its own bosom ill at ease,  
 Would laugh away in scorn the sand-wove  
 chain  
 Which their own blindness feigned for ada-  
 mant.  
 Wrong ever builds on quicksands, but the  
 Right  
 To the firm centre lays its moveless base.  
 The tyrant trembles, if the air but stir  
 The innocent ringlets of a child's free hair,  
 And crouches, when the thought of some  
 great spirit,  
 With world-wide murmur, like a rising  
 gale,  
 Over men's hearts, as over standing corn,  
 Rushes, and bends them to its own strong  
 will.  
 So shall some thought of mine yet circle  
 earth,  
 And puff away thy crumbling altars, Jove !  
  
 And, wouldst thou know of my supreme  
 revenge,  
 Poor tyrant, even now dethroned in heart,  
 Realmless in soul, as tyrants ever are,  
 Listen ! and tell me if this bitter peak,  
 This never-glutted vulture, and these  
 chains  
 Shrink not before it; for it shall befit  
 A sorrow-taught, unconquered Titan-heart.  
 Men, when their death is on them, seem to  
 stand

On a precipitous crag that overhangs  
 The abyss of doom, and in that depth to see,  
 As in a glass, the features dim and vast  
 Of things to come, the shadows, as it  
   seems,  
 Of what have been. Death ever fronts the  
   wise;  
 Not fearfully, but with clear promises  
 Of larger life, on whose broad vans up-  
   borne,  
 Their outlook widens, and they see beyond  
 The horizon of the Present and the Past,  
 Even to the very source and end of things.  
 Such am I now: immortal woe hath made  
 My heart a seer, and my soul a judge  
 Between the substance and the shadow of  
   Truth.  
 The sure supremeness of the Beautiful,  
 By all the martyrdoms made doubly sure  
 Of such as I am, this is my revenge,  
 Which of my wrongs builds a triumphal  
   arch,  
 Through which I see a sceptre and a  
   throne.  
 The pipings of glad shepherds on the hills,  
 Tending the flocks no more to bleed for  
   thee;  
 The songs of maidens pressing with white  
   feet  
 The vintage on thine altars poured no more;  
 The murmurous bliss of lovers underneath  
 Dim grapevine bowers whose rosy bunches  
   press  
 Not half so closely their warm cheeks, un-  
   paled  
 By thoughts of thy brute lust; the hive-  
   like hum  
 Of peaceful commonwealths, where sun-  
   burnt Toil  
 Reaps for itself the rich earth made its own  
 By its own labor, lightened with glad  
   hymns  
 To an omnipotence which thy mad bolts  
 Would cope with as a spark with the vast  
   sea, —  
 Even the spirit of free love and peace,  
 Duty's sure recompense through life and  
   death, —  
 These are such harvests as all master-  
   spirits  
 Reap, haply not on earth, but reap no less  
 Because the sheaves are bound by hands  
   not theirs;  
 These are the bloodless daggers where-  
   withal

They stab fallen tyrants, 'tis their high re-  
   venge:  
 For their best part of life on earth is when,  
 Long after death, prisoned and pent no  
   more,  
 Their thoughts, their wild dreams even,  
   have become  
 Part of the necessary air men breathe:  
 When, like the moon, herself behind a  
   cloud,  
 They shed down light before us on life's  
   sea,  
 That cheers us to steer onward still in  
   hope.  
 Earth with her twining memories ivies o'er  
 Their holy sepulchres; the chainless sea,  
 In tempest or wide calm, repeats their  
   thoughts;  
 The lightning and the thunder, all free  
   things,  
 Have legends of them for the ears of men.  
 All other glories are as falling stars,  
 But universal Nature watches theirs:  
 Such strength is won by love of human-  
   kind.

Not that I feel that hunger after fame,  
 Which souls of a half-greatness are beset  
   with;  
 But that the memory of noble deeds  
 Cries shame upon the idle and the vile,  
 And keeps the heart of Man forever up  
 To the heroic level of old time.  
 To be forgot at first is little pain  
 To a heart conscious of such high intent  
 As must be deathless on the lips of men;  
 But, having been a name, to sink and be  
 A something which the world can do with-  
   out,  
 Which, having been or not, would never  
   change  
 The lightest pulse of fate, — this is indeed  
 A cup of bitterness the worst to taste,  
 And this thy heart shall empty to the  
   dregs.  
 Endless despair shall be thy Caucasus,  
 And memory thy vulture; thou wilt find  
 Oblivion far lonelier than this peak.  
 Behold thy destiny! Thou think'st it much  
 That I should brave thee, miserable god!  
 But I have braved a mightier than thou,  
 Even the sharp tempting of this soaring  
   heart,  
 Which might have made me, scarcely less  
   than thou,

A god among my brethren weak and blind,  
 Scarce less than thou, a pitiable thing  
 To be down-trodden into darkness soon.  
 But now I am above thee, for thou art  
 The bungling workmanship of fear, the  
 block

That awes the swart Barbarian; but I  
 Am what myself have made, — a nature  
 wise

With finding in itself the types of all,  
 With watching from the dim verge of the  
 time

What things to be are visible in the gleams  
 Thrown forward on them from the lumi-  
 nous past,

Wise with the history of its own frail  
 heart,

With reverence and with sorrow, and with  
 love,

Broad as the world, for freedom and for  
 man.

Thou and all strength shall crumble, ex-  
 cept Love,

By whom, and for whose glory, ye shall  
 cease:

And, when thou 'rt but a weary moaning  
 heard

From out the pitiless gloom of Chaos, I  
 Shall be a power and a memory,  
 A name to fright all tyrants with, a light  
 Unsetting as the pole-star, a great voice  
 Heard in the breathless pauses of the  
 fight

By truth and freedom ever waged with  
 wrong,

Clear as a silver trumpet, to awake  
 Far echoes that from age to age live on  
 In kindred spirits, giving them a sense  
 Of boundless power from boundless suffer-  
 ing wrong;

And many a glazing eye shall smile to see  
 The memory of my triumph (for to meet  
 Wrong with endurance, and to overcome  
 The present with a heart that looks beyond,  
 Are triumph) like a prophet eagle, perch  
 Upon the sacred banner of the Right.

Evil springs up, and flowers, and bears no  
 seed,

And feeds the green earth with its swift  
 decay,

Leaving it richer for the growth of truth;  
 But Good, once put in action or in thought,  
 Like a strong oak, doth from its boughs  
 shed down

The ripe germs of a forest. Thou, weak  
 god,

Shalt fade and be forgotten ! but this soul,  
 Fresh-living still in the serene abyss,  
 In every heaving shall partake, that grows  
 From heart to heart among the sons of  
 men, —

As the ominous hum before the earthquake  
 runs

Far through the Ægean from roused isle  
 to isle, —

Foreboding wreck to palaces and shrines,  
 And mighty rents in many a cavernous  
 error

That darkens the free light to man: — This  
 heart,

Unscarred by thy grim vulture, as the truth  
 Grows but more lovely 'neath the beaks  
 and claws

Of Harpies blind that fain would soil it,  
 shall

In all the throbbing exultations share  
 That wait on freedom's triumphs, and in  
 all

The glorious agonies of martyr-spirits,  
 Sharp lightning-throes to split the jagged  
 clouds

That veil the future, showing them the  
 end,

Pain's thorny crown for constancy and  
 truth,

Girding the temples like a wreath of stars.  
 This is a thought, that, like the fabled  
 laurel,

Makes my faith thunder-proof; and thy  
 dread bolts

Fall on me like the silent flakes of snow  
 On the hoar brows of aged Caucasus:

But, oh, thought far more blissful, they  
 can rend

This cloud of flesh, and make my soul a  
 star !

Unleash thy crouching thunders now, O  
 Jove !

Free this high heart, which, a poor captive  
 long,

Doth knock to be let forth, this heart  
 which still,

In its invincible manhood, overtops  
 Thy puny godship, as this mountain doth

The pines that moss its roots. Oh, even  
 now,

While from my peak of suffering I look  
 down,



Beholding with a far-spread gush of hope  
The sunrise of that Beauty, in whose face,  
Shone all around with love, no man shall  
look

But straightway like a god he be uplift  
Unto the throne long empty for his sake,  
And clearly oft foreshadowed in brave  
dreams

By his free inward nature, which nor thou,  
Nor any anarch after thee, can bind  
From working its great doom, — now, now  
set free

This essence, not to die, but to become  
Part of that awful Presence which doth  
haunt

The palaces of tyrants, to scare off,  
With its grim eyes and fearful whisperings  
And hideous sense of utter loneliness,  
All hope of safety, all desire of peace,  
All but the loathed forefeeling of blank  
death, —

Part of that spirit which doth ever brood  
In patient calm on the unpilfered nest  
Of man's deep heart, till mighty thoughts  
grow fledged

To sail with darkening shadow o'er the  
world,

Filling with dread such souls as dare not  
trust

In the unfailing energy of Good,  
Until they swoop, and their pale quarry  
make

Of some o'erbloated wrong, — that spirit  
which

Scatters great hopes in the seed-field of  
man,

Like acorns among grain, to grow and be  
A roof for freedom in all coming time !

But no, this cannot be; for ages yet,  
In solitude unbroken, shall I hear  
The angry Caspian to the Euxine shout,  
And Euxine answer with a muffled roar,  
On either side storming the giant walls  
Of Caucasus with leagues of climbing foam  
(Less, from my height, than flakes of  
downy snow),

That draw back baffled but to hurl again,  
Snatched up in wrath and horrible turmoil,  
Mountain on mountain, as the Titans erst,  
My brethren, sealing the high seat of Jove,  
Heaved Pelion upon Ossa's shoulders  
broad

In vain emprise. The moon will come and  
go

With her monotonous vicissitude;  
Once beautiful, when I was free to walk  
Among my fellows, and to interchange  
The influence benign of loving eyes,  
But now by aged use grown wearisome; —  
False thought ! most false ! for how could  
I endure

These crawling centuries of lonely woe  
Unshamed by weak complaining, but for  
thee,

Loneliest, save me, of all created things,  
Mild-eyed Astarte, my best comforter,  
With thy pale smile of sad benignity ?

Year after year will pass away and seem  
To me, in mine eternal agony,  
But as the shadows of dumb summer  
clouds,

Which I have watched so often darkening  
o'er

The vast Sarmatian plain, league-wide at  
first,

But, with still swiftiness, lessening on and  
on

Till cloud and shadow meet and mingle  
where

The gray horizon fades into the sky,  
Far, far to northward. Yes, for ages yet  
Must I lie here upon my altar huge,  
A sacrifice for man. Sorrow will be,  
As it hath been, his portion; endless doom,  
While the immortal with the mortal linked  
Dreams of its wings and pines for what it  
dreams,

With upward yearn unceasing. Better  
so:

For wisdom is stern sorrow's patient child,  
And empire over self, and all the deep  
Strong charities that make men seem like  
gods;

And love, that makes them be gods, from  
her breasts

Sucks in the milk that makes mankind one  
blood.

Good never comes unmixed, or so it seems,  
Having two faces, as some images  
Are carved, of foolish gods; one face is  
ill;

But one heart lies beneath, and that is  
good,

As are all hearts, when we explore their  
depths.

Therefore, great heart, bear up ! thou art  
but type

Of what all lofty spirits endure, that fain

Would win men back to strength and  
 peace through love:  
 Each hath his lonely peak, and on each  
 heart  
 Envy, or scorn, or hatred, tears lifelong  
 With vulture beak; yet the high soul is  
 left;  
 And faith, which is but hope grown wise,  
 and love  
 And patience which at last shall overcome.

### THE SHEPHERD OF KING AD- METUS

THERE came a youth upon the earth,  
 Some thousand years ago,  
 Whose slender hands were nothing worth,  
 Whether to plough, or reap, or sow.

Upon an empty tortoise-shell  
 He stretched some chords, and drew  
 Music that made men's bosoms swell  
 Fearless, or brimmed their eyes with dew.

Then King Admetus, one who had  
 Pure taste by right divine,  
 Decreed his singing not too bad  
 To hear between the cups of wine:

And so, well pleased with being soothed  
 Into a sweet half-sleep,  
 Three times his kingly beard he smoothed,  
 And made him viceroy o'er his sheep.

His words were simple words enough,  
 And yet he used them so,  
 That what in other mouths was rough  
 In his seemed musical and low.

Men called him but a shiftless youth,  
 In whom no good they saw;  
 And yet, unwittingly, in truth,  
 They made his careless words their law.

They knew not how he learned at all,  
 For idly, hour by hour,  
 He sat and watched the dead leaves fall,  
 Or mused upon a common flower.

It seemed the loveliness of things  
 Did teach him all their use,  
 For, in mere weeds, and stones, and  
 springs,  
 He found a healing power profuse.

Men granted that his speech was wise,  
 But, when a glance they caught  
 Of his slim grace and woman's eyes,  
 They laughed, and called him good-for-  
 naught.

Yet after he was dead and gone,  
 And e'en his memory dim,  
 Earth seemed more sweet to live upon,  
 More full of love, because of him.

And day by day more holy grew  
 Each spot where he had trod,  
 Till after-poets only knew  
 Their first-born brother as a god.

### THE TOKEN

It is a mere wild rosebud,  
 Quite fallow now, and dry,  
 Yet there's something wondrous in it,  
 Some gleams of days gone by,  
 Dear sights and sounds that are to me  
 The very moons of memory,  
 And stir my heart's blood far below  
 Its short-lived waves of joy and woe.

Lips must fade and roses wither,  
 All sweet times be o'er;  
 They only smile, and, murmuring  
 "Thither!"

Stay with us no more:  
 And yet ofttimes a look or smile,  
 Forgotten in a kiss's while,  
 Years after from the dark will start,  
 And flash across the trembling heart.

Thou hast given me many roses,  
 But never one, like this,  
 O'erfloods both sense and spirit  
 With such a deep, wild bliss;  
 We must have instincts that glean up  
 Sparse drops of this life in the cup,  
 Whose taste shall give us all that we  
 Can prove of immortality.

Earth's stablest things are shadows,  
 And, in the life to come,  
 Haply some chance-saved trifle  
 May tell of this old home:  
 As now sometimes we seem to find,  
 In a dark crevice of the mind,  
 Some relic, which, long pondered o'er,  
 Hints faintly at a life before.

## AN INCIDENT IN A RAILROAD CAR

He spoke of Burns: men rude and rough  
 Pressed round to hear the praise of one  
 Whose heart was made of manly, simple  
 stuff,  
 As homespun as their own.

And, when he read, they forward leaned,  
 Drinking, with thirsty hearts and ears,  
 His brook-like songs whom glory never  
 weaned  
 From humble smiles and tears.

Slowly there grew a tender awe,  
 Sun-like, o'er faces brown and hard,  
 As if in him who read they felt and saw  
 Some presence of the bard.

It was a sight for sin and wrong  
 And slavish tyranny to see,  
 A sight to make our faith more pure and  
 strong  
 In high humanity.

I thought, these men will carry hence  
 Promptings their former life above,  
 And something of a finer reverence  
 For beauty, truth, and love.

God scatters love on every side  
 Freely among his children all,  
 And always hearts are lying open wide,  
 Wherein some grains may fall.

There is no wind but soweth seeds  
 Of a more true and open life,  
 Which burst, unlooked for, into high-souled  
 deeds,  
 With wayside beauty rife.

We find within these souls of ours  
 Some wild germs of a higher birth,  
 Which in the poet's tropic heart bear flowers  
 Whose fragrance fills the earth.

Within the hearts of all men lie  
 These promises of wider bliss,  
 Which blossom into hopes that cannot die,  
 In sunny hours like this.

All that hath been majestical  
 In life or death, since time began,

Is native in the simple heart of all,  
 The angel heart of man.

And thus, among the untaught poor,  
 Great deeds and feelings find a home,  
 That cast in shadow all the golden lore  
 Of classic Greece and Rome.

O mighty brother-soul of man,  
 Where'er thou art, in low or high,  
 Thy skyey arches with exulting span  
 O'er-roof infinity!

All thoughts that mould the age begin  
 Deep down within the primitive soul,  
 And from the many slowly upward win  
 To one who grasps the whole:

In his wide brain the feeling deep  
 That struggled on the many's tongue  
 Swells to a tide of thought, whose surges  
 leap  
 O'er the weak thrones of wrong.

All thought begins in feeling, — wide  
 In the great mass its base is hid,  
 And, narrowing up to thought, stands  
 glorified,  
 A moveless pyramid.

Nor is he far astray, who deems  
 That every hope, which rises and grows  
 broad  
 In the world's heart, by ordered impulse  
 streams  
 From the great heart of God.

God wills, man hopes: in common souls  
 Hope is but vague and undefined,  
 Till from the poet's tongue the message  
 rolls  
 A blessing to his kind.

Never did Poesy appear  
 So full of heaven to me, as when  
 I saw how it would pierce through pride  
 and fear  
 To the lives of coarsest men.

It may be glorious to write  
 Thoughts that shall glad the two or  
 three  
 High souls, like those far stars that come in  
 sight  
 Once in a century; —

But better far it is to speak  
 One simple word, which now and then  
 Shall waken their free nature in the weak  
 And friendless sons of men;

To write some earnest verse or line,  
 Which, seeking not the praise of art,  
 Shall make a clearer faith and manhood  
 shine  
 In the untutored heart.

He who doth this, in verse or prose,  
 May be forgotten in his day,  
 But surely shall be crowned at last with  
 those  
 Who live and speak for aye.

### RHÆCUS

GOD sends his teachers unto every age,  
 To every clime, and every race of men,  
 With revelations fitted to their growth  
 And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of  
 Truth  
 Into the selfish rule of one sole race:  
 Therefore each form of worship that hath  
 swayed  
 The life of man, and given it to grasp  
 The master-key of knowledge, reverence,  
 Infolds some germs of goodness and of  
 right;  
 Else never had the eager soul, which  
 loathes  
 The slothful down of pampered ignorance,  
 Found in it even a moment's fitful rest.

There is an instinct in the human heart  
 Which makes that all the fables it hath  
 coined,  
 To justify the reign of its belief  
 And strengthen it by beauty's right divine,  
 Veil in their inner cells a mystic gift,  
 Which, like the hazel twig, in faithful  
 hands,  
 Points surely to the hidden springs of  
 truth.  
 For, as in nature naught is made in vain,  
 But all things have within their hull of  
 use  
 A wisdom and a meaning which may speak  
 Of spiritual secrets to the ear  
 Of spirit; so, in whatso'er the heart  
 Hath fashioned for a solace to itself,  
 To make its inspirations suit its creed,

And from the niggard hands of falsehood  
 wring  
 Its needful food of truth, there ever is  
 A sympathy with Nature, which reveals,  
 Not less than her own works, pure gleams  
 of light  
 And earnest parables of inward lore.  
 Hear now this fairy legend of old Greece,  
 As full of gracious youth, and beauty still  
 As the immortal freshness of that grace  
 Carved for all ages on some Attic frieze.

A youth named Rhæcus, wandering in  
 the wood,  
 Saw an old oak just trembling to its fall,  
 And, feeling pity of so fair a tree,  
 He propped its gray trunk with admiring  
 care,  
 And with a thoughtless footstep loitered  
 on.  
 But, as he turned, he heard a voice behind  
 That murmured "Rhæcus!" 'T was as if  
 the leaves,  
 Stirred by a passing breath, had murmured  
 it,  
 And, while he paused bewildered, yet again  
 It murmured "Rhæcus!" softer than a  
 breeze.  
 He started and beheld with dizzy eyes  
 What seemed the substance of a happy  
 dream  
 Stand there before him, spreading a warm  
 glow  
 Within the green glooms of the shadowy  
 oak.  
 It seemed a woman's shape, yet far too fair  
 To be a woman, and with eyes too meek  
 For any that were wont to mate with gods.  
 All naked like a goddess stood she there,  
 And like a goddess all too beautiful  
 To feel the guilt-born earthliness of shame.  
 "Rhæcus, I am the Dryad of this tree,"  
 Thus she began, dropping her low-toned  
 words  
 Serene, and full, and clear, as drops of dew,  
 "And with it I am doomed to live and die;  
 The rain and sunshine are my caterers,  
 Nor have I other bliss than simple life;  
 Now ask me what thou wilt, that I can  
 give,  
 And with a thankful joy it shall be thine."

Then Rhæcus, with a flutter at the heart,  
 Yet by the prompting of such beauty bold,  
 Answered: "What is there that can satisfy



The endless craving of the soul but love ?  
Give me thy love, or but the hope of that  
Which must be evermore my nature's  
goal."

After a little pause she said again,  
But with a glimpse of sadness in her tone,  
"I give it, Rhæcus, though a perilous gift;  
An hour before the sunset meet me here."  
And straightway there was nothing he  
could see

But the green glooms beneath the shadowy  
oak,

And not a sound came to his straining ears  
But the low trickling rustle of the leaves,  
And far away upon an emerald slope  
The falter of an idle shepherd's pipe.

Now, in those days of simpleness and  
faith,  
Men did not think that happy things were  
dreams

Because they overstepped the narrow bourn  
Of likelihood, but reverently deemed  
Nothing too wondrous or too beautiful  
To be the guerdon of a daring heart.  
So Rhæcus made no doubt that he was  
blest,

And all along unto the city's gate  
Earth seemed to spring beneath him as he  
walked,

The clear, broad sky looked bluer than its  
wont,

And he could scarce believe he had not  
wings,

Such sunshine seemed to glitter through  
his veins

Instead of blood, so light he felt and  
strange.

Young Rhæcus had a faithful heart  
enough,

But one that in the present dwelt too  
much,

And, taking with blithe welcome whatso-  
e'er

Chance gave of joy, was wholly bound in  
that,

Like the contented peasant of a vale,  
Deemed it the world, and never looked  
beyond.

So, haply meeting in the afternoon  
Some comrades who were playing at the  
dice,

He joined them, and forgot all else be-  
side.

The dice were rattling at the merriest,  
And Rhæcus, who had met but sorry luck,  
Just laughed in triumph at a happy throw,  
When through the room there hummed a  
yellow bee

That buzzed about his ear with down-  
dropped legs

As if to light. And Rhæcus laughed and  
said,

Feeling how red and flushed he was with  
loss,

"By Venus ! does he take me for a rose ?"  
And brushed him off with rough, impa-  
tient hand.

But still the bee came back, and thrice  
again

Rhæcus did beat him off with growing  
wrath.

Then through the window flew the wounded  
bee,

And Rhæcus, tracking him with angry  
eyes,

Saw a sharp mountain-peak of Thessaly  
Against the red disk of the setting sun,—  
And instantly the blood sank from his  
heart,

As if its very walls had caved away.

Without a word he turned, and, rushing  
forth,

Ran madly through the city and the gate,  
And o'er the plain, which now the wood's  
long shade,

By the low sun thrown forward broad and  
dim,

Darkened wellnigh unto the city's wall.

Quite spent and out of breath he reached  
the tree,

And, listening fearfully, he heard once  
more

The low voice murmur "Rhæcus !" close  
at hand:

Whereat he looked around him, but could  
see

Naught but the deepening glooms beneath  
the oak.

Then sighed the voice, "O Rhæcus ! never-  
more

Shalt thou behold me or by day or night,  
Me, who would fain have blessed thee with  
a love

More ripe and bounteous than ever yet

Filled up with nectar any mortal heart:

But thou didst scorn my humble messen-  
ger,

And sent'st him back to me with bruised wings.  
 We spirits only show to gentle eyes,  
 We ever ask an undivided love,  
 And he who scorns the least of Nature's works  
 Is thenceforth exiled and shut out from all.  
 Farewell! for thou canst never see me more."

Then Rhœcus beat his breast, and groaned aloud,  
 And cried, "Be pitiful! forgive me yet  
 This once, and I shall never need it more!"  
 "Alas!" the voice returned, "'t is thou art blind,  
 Not I unmerciful; I can forgive,  
 But have no skill to heal thy spirit's eyes;  
 Only the soul hath power o'er itself."  
 With that again there murmured "Nevermore!"  
 And Rhœcus after heard no other sound,  
 Except the rattling of the oak's crisp leaves,  
 Like the long surf upon a distant shore,  
 Raking the sea-worn pebbles up and down.  
 The night had gathered round him: o'er the plain  
 The city sparkled with its thousand lights,  
 And sounds of revel fell upon his ear  
 Harshly and like a curse; above, the sky,  
 With all its bright sublimity of stars,  
 Deepened, and on his forehead smote the breeze:  
 Beauty was all around him and delight,  
 But from that eve he was alone on earth.

### THE FALCON

I KNOW a falcon swift and peerless  
 As e'er was cradled in the pine;  
 No bird had ever eye so fearless,  
 Or wing so strong as this of mine.

The winds not better love to pilot  
 A cloud with molten gold o'errun,  
 Than him, a little burning islet,  
 A star above the coming sun.

For with a lark's heart he doth tower,  
 By a glorious upward instinct drawn;  
 No bee nestles deeper in the flower  
 Than he in the bursting rose of dawn.

No harmless dove, no bird that singeth,  
 Shudders to see him overhead;  
 The rush of his fierce swooping bringeth  
 To innocent hearts no thrill of dread.

Let fraud and wrong and baseness shiver,  
 For still between them and the sky  
 The falcon Truth hangs poised forever  
 And marks them with his vengeful eye.

### TRIAL

#### I

WHETHER the idle prisoner through his grate  
 Watches the waving of the grass-tuft small,  
 Which, having colonized its rift i' th' wall,  
 Accepts God's dole of good or evil fate,  
 And from the sky's just helmet draws its lot  
 Daily of shower or sunshine, cold or hot;—  
 Whether the closer captive of a creed,  
 Cooped up from birth to grind out endless chaff,  
 Sees through his treadmill-bars the noonday laugh,  
 And feels in vain his crumpled pinions breed;—  
 Whether the Georgian slave look up and mark,  
 With bellying sails puffed full, the tall cloud-bark  
 Sink northward slowly,—thou alone seem'st good,  
 Fair only thou, O Freedom, whose desire  
 Can light in muddiest souls quick seeds of fire,  
 And strain life's chords to the old heroic mood.

#### II

Yet are there other gifts more fair than thine,  
 Nor can I count him happiest who has never  
 Been forced with his own hand his chains to sever,  
 And for himself find out the way divine;  
 He never knew the aspirer's glorious pains,  
 He never earned the struggle's priceless gains.  
 Oh, block by block, with sore and sharp endeavor,  
 Lifelong we build these human natures up  
 Into a temple fit for Freedom's shrine,

And Trial ever consecrates the cup  
Wherefrom we pour her sacrificial wine.

## A GLANCE BEHIND THE CURTAIN

This poem, printed in *The Democratic Review* for September, 1843, is most probably the one to which Lowell refers in a letter to C. F. Briggs, already quoted in the head-note to *Prometheus*: "I have sent another poem to O'Sullivan, still more radical than *Prometheus*, and in some respects better, though, from its subject, incapable of so high a strain as that." Elsewhere in this letter he appears to give it the title *Cromwell*.

It is interesting to turn back five years to the summer of Lowell's graduation and listen to what he says to G. B. Loring: "A plan has been running in my head for some time, of writing a sort of dramatic poem on the subject of Cromwell. Those old Roundheads have never had justice done them. They have only been held up as canting, psalm-singing, hypocritical rascals; as a sort of foil for the open-hearted Cavalier. But it were a strange thing, indeed, if there were not somewhat in such men as Milton, Sidney, Hampden, Selden, and Pym. It always struck me that there was more true poetry in those old fiery-eyed, buff-belted warriors, with their deep, holy enthusiasm for liberty and democracy, political and religious; with their glorious trust in the arm of the Lord in battle—than in the dashing, ranting Cavaliers, who wished to restore their king that they might give vent to their passions, and go to sleep again in the laps of their mistresses, deaf to the cries of the poor and the oppressed."

WE see but half the causes of our deeds,  
Seeking them wholly in the outer life,  
And heedless of the encircling spirit-world,  
Which, though unseen, is felt, and sows in us

All germs of pure and world-wide purposes.  
From one stage of our being to the next  
We pass unconscious o'er a slender bridge,  
The momentary work of unseen hands,  
Which crumbles down behind us; looking back,

We see the other shore, the gulf between,  
And, marvelling how we won to where we stand,

Content ourselves to call the builder Chance.  
We trace the wisdom to the apple's fall,  
Not to the birth-throes of a mighty Truth  
Which, for long ages in blank Chaos dumb,

Yet yearned to be incarnate, and had found  
At last a spirit meet to be the womb  
From which it might be born to bless mankind,—

Not to the soul of Newton, ripe with all  
The hoarded thoughtfulness of earnest years,

And waiting but one ray of sunlight more  
To blossom fully.

But whence came that ray?

We call our sorrows Destiny, but ought  
Rather to name our high successes so.  
Only the instincts of great souls are Fate,  
And have predestined sway: all other things,

Except by leave of us, could never be.  
For Destiny is but the breath of God  
Still moving in us, the last fragment left  
Of our unfallen nature, waking oft  
Within our thought, to beckon us beyond  
The narrow circle of the seen and known,  
And always tending to a noble end,  
As all things must that overrule the soul,  
And for a space unseat the helmsman, Will.  
The fate of England and of freedom once  
Seemed wavering in the heart of one plain man:

One step of his, and the great dial-hand,  
That marks the destined progress of the world

In the eternal round from wisdom on  
To higher wisdom, had been made to pause  
A hundred years. That step he did not take,—

He knew not why, nor we, but only God,—  
And lived to make his simple oaken chair  
More terrible and soberly august,  
More full of majesty than any throne,  
Before or after, of a British king.

Upon the pier stood two stern-visaged men,

Looking to where a little craft lay moored,  
Swayed by the lazy current of the Thames,  
Which weltered by in muddy listlessness.  
Grave men they were, and battlings of fierce thought

Had trampled out all softness from their brows,

And ploughed rough furrows there before their time,

For other crop than such as homebred Peace

Sows broadcast in the willing soil of Youth.

Care, not of self, but for the common-weal,  
Had robbed their eyes of youth, and left  
instead

A look of patient power and iron will,  
And something fiercer, too, that gave  
broad hint

Of the plain weapons girded at their sides.  
The younger had an aspect of command,—  
Not such as trickles down, a slender  
stream,

In the shrunk channel of a great descent,  
But such as lies entowered in heart and  
head,

And an arm prompt to do the 'hests of  
both.

His was a brow where gold were out of  
place,

And yet it seemed right worthy of a crown  
(Though he despised such), were it only  
made

Of iron, or some serviceable stuff  
That would have matched his brownly  
rugged face.

The elder, although such he hardly seemed  
(Care makes so little of some five short  
years),

Had a clear, honest face, whose rough-  
hewn strength

Was mildened by the scholar's wiser heart  
To sober courage, such as best befits

The unsullied temper of a well-taught  
mind,

Yet so remained that one could plainly  
guess

The hushed volcano smouldering under-  
neath.

He spoke: the other, hearing, kept his  
gaze

Still fixed, as on some problem in the sky.

“O CROMWELL, we are fallen on evil  
times!

There was a day when England had wide  
room

For honest men as well as foolish kings:

But now the uneasy stomach of the time  
Turns squeamish at them both. Therefore  
let us

Seek out that savage clime, where men as  
yet

Are free: there sleeps the vessel on the tide,  
Her languid canvas drooping for the wind;  
Give us but that, and what need we to fear  
This Order of the Council? The free  
waves

Will not say No to please a wayward king,  
Nor will the winds turn traitors at his  
beck:

All things are fitly cared for, and the Lord  
Will watch as kindly o'er the exodus  
Of us his servants now, as in old time.

We have no cloud or fire, and haply we  
May not pass dry-shod through the ocean-  
stream;

But, saved or lost, all things are in His  
hand.”

So spake he, and meantime the other stood  
With wide gray eyes still reading the blank  
air,

As if upon the sky's blue wall he saw  
Some mystic sentence, written by a hand,  
Such as of old made pale the Assyrian  
king,

Girt with his satraps in the blazing feast.

“HAMPDEN! a moment since, my pur-  
pose was

To fly with thee, — for I will call it flight,  
Nor flatter it with any smoother name, —  
But something in me bids me not to go;

And I am one, thou knowest, who, un-  
moved

By what the weak deem omens, yet give  
heed

And reverence due to whatsoever my soul  
Whispers of warning to the inner ear.

Moreover, as I know that God brings  
round

His purposes in ways undreamed by us,  
And makes the wicked but his instruments  
To hasten their own swift and sudden fall,  
I see the beauty of his providence

In the King's order: blind, he will not let  
His doom part from him, but must bid it  
stay

As 't were a cricket, whose enlivening  
chirp

He loved to hear beneath his very hearth.  
Why should we fly? Nay, why not rather  
stay

And rear again our Zion's crumbled walls,  
Not, as of old the walls of Thebes were  
built,

By minstrel twanging, but, if need should  
be,

With the more potent music of our swords?  
Think'st thou that score of men beyond the  
sea

Claim more God's care than all of England  
here?



No: when He moves His arm, it is to aid  
Whole peoples, heedless if a few be  
crushed,

As some are ever, when the destiny  
Of man takes one stride onward nearer  
home.

Believe me, 't is the mass of men He  
loves;

And, where there is most sorrow and most  
want,

Where the high heart of man is trodden  
down

The most, 't is not because He hides His  
face

From them in wrath, as purblind teachers  
prate:

Not so: there most is He, for there is He  
Most needed. Men who seek for Fate  
abroad

Are not so near His heart as they who dare  
Frankly to face her where she faces them,  
On their own threshold, where their souls  
are strong

To grapple with and throw her; as I once,  
Being yet a boy, did cast this puny king,  
Who now has grown so dotard as to deem  
That he can wrestle with an angry realm,  
And throw the brawned Antæus of men's  
rights.

No, Hampden! they have half-way con-  
quered Fate

Who go half-way to meet her, — as will I.  
Freedom hath yet a work for me to do;  
So speaks that inward voice which never yet  
Spake falsely, when it urged the spirit on  
To noble emprise for country and mankind.  
And, for success, I ask no more than  
this, —

To bear unflinching witness to the truth.  
All true whole men succeed; for what is  
worth

Success's name, unless it be the thought,  
The inward surety, to have carried out  
A noble purpose to a noble end,  
Although it be the gallows or the block?

'T is only Falsehood that doth ever need  
These outward shows of gain to bolster her.  
Be it we prove the weaker with our swords;  
Truth only needs to be for once spoke out,  
And there's such music in her, such  
strange rhythm,

As makes men's memories her joyous  
slaves,

And clings around the soul, as the sky  
clings

Round the mute earth, forever beautiful,  
And, if o'erclouded, only to burst forth  
More all-embracingly divine and clear:  
Get but the truth once uttered, and 't is  
like

A star new-born, that drops into its place,  
And which, once circling in its placid  
round,

Not all the tumult of the earth can shake.

“What should we do in that small colony  
Of pinched fanatics, who would rather  
choose

Freedom to clip an inch more from their  
hair,

Than the great chance of setting England  
free?

Not there, amid the stormy wilderness,  
Should we learn wisdom; or if learned,  
what room

To put it into act, — else worse than  
naught?

We learn our souls more, tossing for an  
hour

Upon this huge and ever-vexed sea  
Of human thought, where kingdoms go to  
wreck

Like fragile bubbles yonder in the stream,  
Than in a cycle of New England sloth,  
Broke only by a petty Indian war,  
Or quarrel for a letter more or less

In some hard word, which, spelt in either  
way,

Not their most learned clerks can under-  
stand.

New times demand new measures and new  
men;

The world advances, and in time outgrows  
The laws that in our fathers' day were  
best;

And, doubtless, after us, some purer  
scheme

Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,  
Made wiser by the steady growth of truth.

We cannot hale Utopia on by force;  
But better, almost, be at work in sin,

Than in a brute inaction browse and sleep.  
No man is born into the world whose work  
Is not born with him; there is always work,  
And tools to work withal, for those who  
will;

And blessed are the horny hands of toil!  
The busy world shoves angrily aside  
The man who stands with arms akimbo set,  
Until occasion tells him what to do;

And he who waits to have his task marked  
out

Shall die and leave his errand unfulfilled.

Our time is one that calls for earnest deeds:  
Reason and Government, like two broad  
seas,

Yearn for each other with outstretch'd  
arms

Across this narrow isthmus of the throne,  
And roll their white surf higher every day.  
One age moves onward, and the next builds  
up

Cities and gorgeous palaces, where stood  
The rude log-huts of those who tamed the  
wild,

Rearing from out the forests they had  
felled

The goodly framework of a fairer state;  
The builder's trowel and the settler's axe  
Are seldom wielded by the selfsame hand;  
Ours is the harder task, yet not the less  
Shall we receive the blessing for our toil  
From the choice spirits of the aftertime.  
My soul is not a palace of the past,  
Where outworn creeds, like Rome's gray  
senate, quake,

Hearing afar the Vandal's trumpet hoarse,  
That shakes old systems with a thunder-fit.  
The time is ripe, and rotten-ripe, for  
change;

Then let it come: I have no dread of what  
Is called for by the instinct of mankind;  
Nor think I that God's world will fall  
apart

Because we tear a parchment more or less.  
Truth is eternal, but her effluence,  
With endless change, is fitted to the hour;  
Her mirror is turned forward to reflect  
The promise of the future, not the past.  
He who would win the name of truly great  
Must understand his own age and the next,  
And make the present ready to fulfil  
Its prophecy, and with the future merge  
Gently and peacefully, as wave with wave.  
The future works out great men's pur-  
poses;

The present is enough for common souls,  
Who, never looking forward, are indeed  
Mere clay, wherein the footprints of their  
age

Are petrified forever: better those  
Who lead the blind old giant by the hand  
From out the pathless desert where he  
gropes,

And set him onward in his darksome way.

I do not fear to follow out the truth,  
Albeit along the precipice's edge.

Let us speak plain: there is more force in  
names

Than most men dream of; and a lie may  
keep

Its throne a whole age longer, if it skulk  
Behind the shield of some fair-seeming  
name.

Let us call tyrants *tyrants*, and maintain  
That only freedom comes by grace of God,  
And all that comes not by His grace must  
fall;

For men in earnest have no time to waste  
In patching fig-leaves for the naked truth.

"I will have one more grapple with the  
man

Charles Stuart: whom the boy o'ercame,  
The man stands not in awe of. I, per-  
chance,

Am one raised up by the Almighty arm  
To witness some great truth to all the  
world.

Souls destined to o'erleap the vulgar lot,  
And mould the world unto the scheme of  
God,

Have a fore-consciousness of their high  
doom,

As men are known to shiver at the heart  
When the cold shadow of some coming ill  
Creeps slowly o'er their spirits unawares.  
Hath God less power of prophecy than  
Ill?

How else could men whom God hath called  
to sway

Earth's rudder, and to steer the bark of  
Truth,

Beating against the tempest tow'rd her  
port,

Bear all the mean and buzzing grievances,  
The petty martyrdoms, wherewith Sin  
strives

To weary out the tethered hope of Faith?  
The sneers, the unrecognized look of  
friends,

Who worship the dead corpse of old king  
Custom,

Where it doth lie in state within the  
Church,

Striving to cover up the mighty ocean  
With a man's palm, and making even the  
truth

Lie for them, holding up the glass reversed,  
To make the hope of man seem farther off?

My God ! when I read o'er the bitter lives  
 Of men whose eager hearts were quite too  
     great  
 To beat beneath the cramped mode of the  
     day,  
 And see them mocked at by the world they  
     love,  
 Hagglng with prejudice for pennyworths  
 Of that reform which their hard toil will  
     make  
 The common birthright of the age to  
     come, —  
 When I see this, spite of my faith in God,  
 I marvel how their hearts bear up so long;  
 Nor could they but for this same prophecy,  
 This inward feeling of the glorious end.

“Deem me not fond; but in my warmer  
     youth,  
 Ere my heart's bloom was soiled and brushed  
     away,  
 I had great dreams of mighty things to  
     come;  
 Of conquest, whether by the sword or pen .  
 I knew not; but some conquest I would  
     have,  
 Or else swift death: now wiser grown in  
     years,  
 I find youth's dreams are but the flutterings  
 Of those strong wings whereon the soul  
     shall soar  
 In after time to win a starry throne;  
 And so I cherish them, for they were lots,  
 Which I, a boy, cast in the helm of Fate.  
 Now will I draw them, since a man's right  
     hand,  
 A right hand guided by an earnest soul,  
 With a true instinct, takes the golden  
     prize  
 From out a thousand blanks. What men  
     call luck  
 Is the prerogative of valiant souls,  
 The fealty life pays its rightful kings.  
 The helm is shaking now, and I will stay  
 To pluck my lot forth; it were sin to flee!”

So they two turned together; one to die,  
 Fighting for freedom on the bloody field;  
 The other, far more happy, to become  
 A name earth wears forever next her heart;  
 One of the few that have a right to rank  
 With the true Makers: for his spirit  
     wrought  
 Order from Chaos; proved that right di-  
     vine

Dwelt only in the excellence of truth;  
 And far within old Darkness' hostile lines  
 Advanced and pitched the shining tents of  
     Light.  
 Nor shall the grateful Muse forget to tell,  
 That — not the least among his many  
     claims  
 To deathless honor — he was MILTON's  
     friend,  
 A man not second among those who lived  
 To show us that the poet's lyre demands  
 An arm of tougher sinew than the sword.

## A CHIPPEWA LEGEND

ἀλλογενὴ μὲν μοι καὶ λέγειν ἔστιν τάδε,  
 ἄλγος δὲ σιγᾶν.

ÆSCHYLUS, *Prom. Vinc.* 197, 198.

For the leading incidents in this tale I am  
 indebted to the very valuable *Algic Researches*  
 of Henry R. Schoolcraft, Esq. J. R. L.

THE old Chief, feeling now wellnigh his  
     end,  
 Called his two eldest children to his side,  
 And gave them, in few words, his parting  
     charge!  
 “My son and daughter, me ye see no more;  
 The happy hunting-grounds await me,  
     green  
 With change of spring and summer through  
     the year:  
 But, for remembrance, after I am gone,  
 Be kind to little Sheemah for my sake:  
 Weaking he is and young, and knows not  
     yet  
 To set the trap, or draw the seasoned bow;  
 Therefore of both your loves he hath more  
     need,  
 And he, who needeth love, to love hath  
     right;  
 It is not like our furs and stores of corn,  
 Whereto we claim sole title by our toil,  
 But the Great Spirit plants it in our hearts,  
 And waters it, and gives it sun, to be  
 The common stock and heritage of all:  
 Therefore be kind to Sheemah, that your  
     selves  
 May not be left deserted in your need.”

Alone, beside a lake, their wigwam stood,  
 Far from the other dwellings of their tribe;  
 And, after many moons, the loneliness  
 Wearied the elder brother, and he said,

"Why should I dwell here far from men,  
shut out

From the free, natural joys that fit my age ?  
Lo, I am tall and strong, well skilled to hunt,

Patient of toil and hunger, and not yet  
Have seen the danger which I dared not look

Full in the face; what hinders me to be  
A mighty Brave and Chief among my kin ?"

So, taking up his arrows and his bow,  
As if to hunt, he journeyed swiftly on,  
Until he gained the wigwams of his tribe,  
Where, choosing out a bride, he soon forgot,

In all the fret and bustle of new life,  
The little Sheemah and his father's charge.

Now when the sister found her brother gone,

And that, for many days, he came not back,  
She wept for Sheemah more than for herself;

For Love bides longest in a woman's heart,  
And flutters many times before he flies,  
And then doth perch so nearly, that a word  
May lure him back to his accustomed nest;  
(And Duty lingers even when Love is gone,  
Oft looking out in hope of his return;  
And, after Duty hath been driven forth,  
Then Selfishness creeps in the last of all,  
Warming her lean hands at the lonely hearth,

And crouching o'er the embers, to shut out  
Whatever paltry warmth and light are left,  
With avaricious greed, from all beside.

So, for long months, the sister hunted wide,  
And cared for little Sheemah tenderly;  
But, daily more and more, the loneliness  
Grew wearisome, and to herself she sighed,  
"Am I not fair ? at least the glassy pool,  
That hath no cause to flatter, tells me so;  
But, oh, how flat and meaningless the tale,  
Unless it tremble on a lover's tongue !  
Beauty hath no true glass, except it be  
In the sweet privacy of loving eyes."

Thus deemed she idly, and forgot the lore  
Which she had learned of nature and the woods,

That beauty's chief reward is to itself,  
And that Love's mirror holds no image long

Save of the inward fairness, blurred and lost

Unless kept clear and white by Duty's care.  
So she went forth and sought the haunts of men,

And, being wedded, in her household cares,  
Soon, like the elder brother, quite forgot  
The little Sheemah and her father's charge.

But Sheemah, left alone within the lodge,  
Waited and waited, with a shrinking heart,  
Thinking each rustle was his sister's step,  
Till hope grew less and less, and then went out,

And every sound was changed from hope to fear.

Few sounds there were:—the dropping of a nut,

The squirrel's chirrup, and the jay's harsh scream,

Autumn's sad remnants of blithe Summer's cheer,

Heard at long intervals, seemed but to make

The dreadful void of silence silenter.

Soon what small store his sister left was gone,

And, through the Autumn, he made shift to live

On roots and berries, gathered in much fear

Of wolves, whose ghastly howl he heard ofttimes,

Hollow and hungry, at the dead of night.  
But Winter came at last, and, when the snow,

Thick-heaped for gleaming leagues o'er hill and plain,  
Spread its unbroken silence over all,

Made sick by hunger, he was fain to glean  
(More bold at heart than Ruth, and all alone)

After the harvest of the merciless wolf,  
Grim Boaz, who, sharp-ribbed and gaunt, yet feared

A thing more wild and starving than himself;

Till, by degrees, the wolf and he grew friends,

And shared together all the winter through.

Late in the Spring, when all the ice was gone,

The elder brother, fishing in the lake,  
Upon whose edge his father's wigwam stood,



Heard a low moaning noise upon the shore:  
Half like a child it seemed, half like a  
wolf,

And straightway there was something in  
his heart

That said, "It is thy brother Sheemah's  
voice."

So, paddling swiftly to the bank, he saw,  
Within a little thicket close at hand,  
A child that seemed fast changing to a  
wolf,

From the neck downward, gray with  
shaggy hair,

That still crept on and upward as he  
looked.

The face was turned away, but well he  
knew

That it was Sheemah's, even his brother's  
face.

Then with his trembling hands he hid his  
eyes,

And bowed his head, so that he might not  
see

The first look of his brother's eyes, and  
cried,

"O Sheemah! O my brother, speak to  
me!

Dost thou not know me, that I am thy  
brother?

Come to me, little Sheemah, thou shalt  
dwell

With me henceforth, and know no care or  
want!"

Sheemah was silent for a space, as if  
'T were hard to summon up a human  
voice,

And, when he spake, the voice was as a  
wolf's:

"I know thee not, nor art thou what thou  
say'st;

I have none other brethren than the  
wolves,

And, till thy heart be changed from what  
it is,

Thou art not worthy to be called their  
kin."

Then groaned the other, with a choking  
tongue,

"Alas! my heart is changed right bitterly;  
'T is shrunk and parched within me even  
now!"

And, looking upward fearfully, he saw  
Only a wolf that shrank away and ran,  
Ugly and fierce, to hide among the woods.

## STANZAS ON FREEDOM

MEN! whose boast it is that ye  
Come of fathers brave and free,  
If there breathe on earth a slave,  
Are ye truly free and brave?  
If ye do not feel the chain,  
When it works a brother's pain,  
Are ye not base slaves indeed,  
Slaves unworthy to be freed?

Women! who shall one day bear  
Sons to breathe New England air,  
If ye hear, without a blush,  
Deeds to make the roused blood rush  
Like red lava through your veins,  
For your sisters now in chains,—  
Answer! are ye fit to be  
Mothers of the brave and free?

Is true Freedom but to break  
Fetters for our own dear sake,  
And, with leathern hearts, forget  
That we owe mankind a debt?  
No! true freedom is to share  
All the chains our brothers wear,  
And, with heart and hand, to be  
Earnest to make others free!

They are slaves who fear to speak  
For the fallen and the weak;  
They are slaves who will not choose  
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,  
Rather than in silence shrink  
From the truth they needs must think;  
They are slaves who dare not be  
In the right with two or three.

## COLUMBUS

I have partly written a poem on *Columbus* to  
match with *Prometheus* and *Cromwell*. I like  
it better than either in point of artistic merit.  
J. R. L. to C. F. Briggs, September 18, 1844.

THE cordage creaks and rattles in the  
wind,  
With whiffs of sudden hush; the reeling  
sea  
Now thumps like solid rock beneath the  
stern,  
Now leaps with clumsy wrath, strikes  
short, and, falling

Crumbled to whispery foam, slips rustling  
down  
The broad backs of the waves, which jostle  
and crowd  
To fling themselves upon that unknown  
shore,  
Their used familiar since the dawn of  
time,  
Whither this foredoomed life is guided on  
To sway on triumph's hushed, aspiring  
poise  
One glittering moment, then to break full-  
filled.

How lonely is the sea's perpetual swing,  
The melancholy wash of endless waves,  
The sigh of some grim monster undescried,  
Fear-painted on the canvas of the dark,  
Shifting on his uneasy pillow of brine !  
Yet night brings more companions than the  
day

To this drear waste; new constellations  
burn,

And fairer stars, with whose calm height  
my soul

Finds nearer sympathy than with my herd  
Of earthen souls, whose vision's scanty ring  
Makes me its prisoner to beat my wings  
Against the cold bars of their unbelief,  
Knowing in vain my own free heaven be-  
yond.

O God ! this world, so crammed with eager  
life,

That comes and goes and wanders back to  
silence

Like the idle wind, which yet man's shap-  
ing mind

Can make his drudge to swell the longing  
sails

Of highest endeavor, — this mad, unthrift  
world,

Which, every hour, throws life enough  
away

To make her deserts kind and hospitable,  
Lets her great destinies be waved aside  
By smooth, lip-reverent, formal infidels,  
Who weigh the God they not believe with  
gold,

And find no spot in Judas, save that he,  
Driving a duller bargain than he ought,  
Saddled his guild with too cheap precedent.  
O Faith ! if thou art strong, thine opposite  
Is mighty also, and the dull fool's sneer  
Hath oftentimes shot chill palsy through the  
arm

Just lifted to achieve its crowning deed,  
And made the firm-based heart, that would  
have quailed

The rack or fagot, shudder like a leaf  
Wrinkled with frost, and loose upon its  
stem.

The wicked and the weak, by some dark  
law,

Have a strange power to shut and rivet  
down

Their own horizon round us, to unwing  
Our heaven-aspiring visions, and to blur  
With surly clouds the Future's gleaming  
peaks,

Far seen across the brine of thankless  
years.

If the chosen soul could never be alone  
In deep mid-silence, open-doored to God,  
No greatness ever had been dreamed or  
done;

Among dull hearts a prophet never grew;  
The nurse of full-grown souls is solitude.

The old world is effete; there man with  
man

Jostles, and, in the brawl for means to live,  
Life is trod underfoot, — Life, the one  
block

Of marble that's vouchsafed wherefrom to  
carve

Our great thoughts, white and godlike, to  
shine down

The future, Life, the irredeemable block,  
Which one o'er-hasty chisel-dint oft mars,  
Seanting our room to cut the features out  
Of our full hope, so forcing us to crown  
With a mean head the perfect limbs, or  
leave

The god's face glowing o'er a satyr's trunk,  
Failure's brief epitaph.

Yes, Europe's world  
Reels on to judgment; there the common  
need,

Losing God's sacred use, to be a bond  
'Twixt Me and Thee, sets each one scowl-  
ingly

O'er his own selfish hoard at bay; no state,  
Knit strongly with eternal fibres up  
Of all men's separate and united weals,  
Self-poised and sole as stars, yet one as  
light,

Holds up a shape of large Humanity  
To which by natural instinct every man  
Pays loyalty exulting, by which all

Mould their own lives, and feel their pulses  
filled  
With the red, fiery blood of the general  
life,  
Making them mighty in peace, as now in  
war  
They are, even in the flush of victory,  
weak,  
Conquering that manhood which should  
them subdue.  
And what gift bring I to this untried  
world?

Shall the same tragedy be played anew,  
And the same lurid curtain drop at last  
On one dread desolation, one fierce crash  
Of that recoil which on its makers God  
Lets Ignorance and Sin and Hunger make,  
Early or late? Or shall that common-  
wealth

Whose potent unity and concentric force  
Can draw these scattered joints and parts  
of men

Into a whole ideal man once more,  
Which sucks not from its limbs the life  
away,

But sends it flood-tide and creates itself  
Over again in every citizen,  
Be there built up? For me, I have no  
choice;

I might turn back to other destinies,  
For one sincere key opes all Fortune's doors;  
But whoso answers not God's earliest call  
Forfeits or dulls that faculty supreme  
Of lying open to his genius  
Which makes the wise heart certain of its  
ends.

Here am I; for what end God knows, not I;  
Westward still points the inexorable soul:  
Here am I, with no friend but the sad sea,  
The beating heart of this great enterprise,  
Which, without me, would stiffen in swift  
death;

This have I mused on, since mine eye could  
first

Among the stars distinguish and with joy  
Rest on that God-fed Pharos of the north,  
On some blue promontory of heaven lighted  
That juts far out into the upper sea;  
To this one hope my heart hath clung for  
years,

As would a foundling to the talisman  
Hung round his neck by hands he knew not  
whose;

A poor, vile thing and dross to all beside,

Yet he therein can feel a virtue left  
By the sad pressure of a mother's hand,  
And unto him it still is tremulous  
With palpitating haste and wet with tears,  
The key to him of hope and humanness,  
The coarse shell of life's pearl, Expectancy.  
This hope hath been to me for love and  
fame,

Hath made me wholly lonely on the earth,  
Building me up as in a thick-ribbed tower,  
Wherewith enwalled my watching spirit  
burned,

Conquering its little island from the Dark,  
Sole as a scholar's lamp, and heard men's  
steps,

In the far hurry of the outward world,  
Pass dimly forth and back, sounds heard in  
dream.

As Ganymede by the eagle was snatched  
up

From the gross sod to be Jove's cup-bearer,  
So was I lifted by my great design:

And who hath trod Olympus, from his eye  
Fades not that broader outlook of the gods;  
His life's low valleys overbrow earth's  
clouds,

And that Olympian spectre of the past  
Looms towering up in sovereign memory,  
Beckoning his soul from meaner heights of  
doom.

Had but the shadow of the Thunderer's  
bird,

Flashing athwart my spirit, made of me  
A swift-betraying vision's Ganymede,  
Yet to have greatly dreamed precludes low  
ends;

Great days have ever such a morning-red,  
On such a base great futures are built up,  
And aspiration, though not put in act,  
Comes back to ask its plighted troth again,  
Still watches round its grave the unlaid  
ghost

Of a dead virtue, and makes other hopes,  
Save that implacable one, seem thin and  
bleak

As shadows of bare trees upon the snow,  
Bound freezing there by the unpyting  
moon.

While other youths perplexed their mando-  
lins,

Praying that Thetis would her fingers  
twine

In the loose glories of her lover's hair,  
And wile another kiss to keep back day,

I, stretched beneath the many-centuried  
shade

Of some writhed oak, the wood's Laocoön,  
Did of my hope a dryad mistress make,  
Whom I would woo to meet me privily,  
Or underneath the stars, or when the  
moon

Flecked all the forest floor with scattered  
pearls.

O days whose memory tames to fawning  
down

The surly fell of Ocean's bristled neck !

I know not when this hope enthralled me  
first,

But from my boyhood up I loved to hear  
The tall pine-forests of the Apennine  
Murmur their hoary legends of the sea,  
Which hearing, I in vision clear beheld  
The sudden dark of tropic night shut down  
O'er the huge whisper of great watery  
wastes,

The while a pair of herons trailingy  
Flapped inland, where some league-wide  
river hurled

The yellow spoil of un conjectured realms  
Far through a gulf's green silence, never  
scarred

By any but the North-wind's hurrying  
keels.

And not the pines alone; all sights and  
sounds

To my world-seeking heart paid fealty,  
And catered for it as the Cretan bees  
Brought honey to the baby Jupiter,  
Who in his soft hand crushed a violet,  
Godlike foremusings the rough thunder's  
gripe;

Then did I entertain the poet's song,  
My great Idea's guest, and, passing o'er  
That iron bridge the Tuscan built to hell,  
I heard Ulysses tell of mountain-chains  
Whose adamantine links, his manacles,  
The western main shook growling, and  
still gnawed.

I brooded on the wise Athenian's tale  
Of happy Atlantis, and heard Björne's  
keel

Crunch the gray pebbles of the Vinland  
shore:

I listened, musing, to the prophecy  
Of Nero's tutor-victim; lo, the birds  
Sing darkling, conscious of the climbing  
dawn.

And I believed the poets; it is they

Who utter wisdom from the central deep,  
And, listening to the inner flow of things,  
Speak to the age out of eternity.

Ah me ! old hermits sought for solitude  
In caves and desert places of the earth,  
Where their own heart-beat was the only  
stir

Of living thing that comforted the year;  
But the bald pillar-top of Simeon,  
In midnight's blankest waste, were popu-  
lous,

Matched with the isolation drear and deep  
Of him who pines among the swarm of  
men,

At once a new thought's king and pris-  
oner,

Feeling the truer life within his life,  
The fountain of his spirit's prophecy,  
Sinking away and wasting, drop by drop,  
In the ungrateful sands of sceptic ears.  
He in the palace-aisles of untrod woods  
Doth walk a king; for him the pent-up  
cell

Widens beyond the circles of the stars,  
And all the sceptred spirits of the past  
Come thronging in to greet him as their  
peer;

But in the market-place's glare and throng  
He sits apart, an exile, and his brow  
Aches with the mocking memory of its  
crown.

Yet to the spirit select there is no choice;  
He cannot say, This will I do, or that,  
For the cheap means putting Heaven's  
ends in pawn,

And bartering his bleak rocks, the freehold  
stern

Of destiny's first-born, for smoother fields  
That yield no crop of self-denying will;  
A hand is stretched to him from out the  
dark,

Which grasping without question, he is led  
Where there is work that he must do for  
God.

The trial still is the strength's complement,  
And the uncertain, dizzy path that scales  
The sheer heights of supremest purposes  
Is steeper to the angel than the child.

Chances have laws as fixed as planets have,  
And disappointment's dry and bitter root,  
Envy's harsh berries, and the choking  
pool

Of the world's scorn, are the right mother-  
milk



To the tough hearts that pioneer their  
kind,  
And break a pathway to those unknown  
realms  
That in the earth's broad shadow lie en-  
thrall'd;

Endurance is the crowning quality,  
And patience all the passion of great  
hearts;

These are their stay, and when the leaden  
world

Sets its hard face against their fateful  
thought,

And brute strength, like the Gaulish con-  
queror,

Clangs his huge glaive down in the other  
scale,

The inspired soul but flings his patience  
in,

And slowly that outweighs the ponderous  
globe,—

One faith against a whole earth's unbe-  
lief,

One soul against the flesh of all mankind.

Thus ever seems it when my soul can hear  
The voice that errs not; then my triumph  
gleams,

O'er the blank ocean beckoning, and all  
night

My heart flies on before me as I sail;

Far on I see my lifelong enterprise,

That rose like Ganges mid the freezing  
snows

Of a world's solitude, sweep broadening  
down,

And, gathering to itself a thousand streams,  
Grow sacred ere it mingle with the sea;

I see the ungated wall of chaos old,

With blocks Cyclopean hewn of solid night,  
Fade like a wreath of unreturning mist

Before the irreversible feet of light;—

And lo, with what clear omen in the east

On day's gray threshold stands the eager  
dawn,

Like young Leander rosy from the sea

Glowing at Hero's lattice !

One day more

These muttering shoalbrains leave the  
helm to me:

God, let me not in their dull ooze be  
stranded;

Let not this one frail bark, to hollow which

I have dug out the pith and sinewy heart  
Of my aspiring life's fair trunk, be so  
Cast up to warp and blacken in the sun,  
Just as the opposing wind 'gins whistle off  
His cheek-swollen pack, and from the lean-  
ing mast

Fortune's full sail strains forward !

One poor day !—

Remember whose and not how short it is !  
It is God's day, it is Columbus's.

A lavish day ! One day, with life and  
heart,

Is more than time enough to find a world.

### AN INCIDENT OF THE FIRE AT HAMBURG

THE tower of old Saint Nicholas soared up-  
ward to the skies,

Like some huge piece of Nature's make, the  
growth of centuries;

You could not deem its crowding spires a  
work of human art,

They seemed to struggle lightward from a  
sturdy living heart.

Not Nature's self more freely speaks in  
crystal or in oak,

Than, through the pious builder's hand, in  
that gray pile she spoke;

And as from acorn springs the oak, so,  
freely and alone,

Sprang from his heart this hymn to God,  
sung in obedient stone.

It seemed a wondrous freak of chance, so  
perfect, yet so rough,

A whim of Nature crystallized slowly in  
granite tough;

The thick spires yearned towards the sky  
in quaint harmonious lines,

And in broad sunlight basked and slept,  
like a grove of blasted pines.

Never did rock or stream or tree lay claim  
with better right

To all the adorning sympathies of shadow  
and of light;

And, in that forest petrified, as forester  
there dwells

Stout Herman, the old sacristan, sole lord  
of all its bells.

Surge leaping after surge, the fire roared  
 onward red as blood,  
 Till half of Hamburg lay engulfed beneath  
 the eddying flood;  
 For miles away the fiery spray poured  
 down its deadly rain,  
 And back and forth the billows sucked,  
 and paused, and burst again.

From square to square with tiger leaps  
 panted the lustful fire,  
 The air to leeward shuddered with the  
 gasps of its desire;  
 And church and palace, which even now  
 stood whelmed but to the knee,  
 Lift their black roofs like breakers lone  
 amid the whirling sea.

Up in his tower old Herman sat and  
 watched with quiet look;  
 His soul had trusted God too long to be at  
 last forsook;  
 He could not fear, for surely God a path-  
 way would unfold  
 Through this red sea for faithful hearts, as  
 once He did of old.

But scarcely can he cross himself, or on his  
 good saint call,  
 Before the sacrilegious flood o'erleaped the  
 church-yard wall;  
 And, ere a *pater* half was said, mid smoke  
 and crackling glare,  
 His island tower scarce juts its head above  
 the wide despair.

Upon the peril's desperate peak his heart  
 stood up sublime;  
 His first thought was for God above, his  
 next was for his chime;  
 "Sing now and make your voices heard in  
 hymns of praise," cried he,  
 "As did the Israelites of old, safe walking  
 through the sea !

"Through this red sea our God hath made  
 the pathway safe to shore;  
 Our promised land stands full in sight;  
 shout now as ne'er before !"  
 And as the tower came crashing down, the  
 bells, in clear accord,  
 Pealed forth the grand old German hymn,  
 —"All good souls, praise the  
 Lord !"

## THE SOWER

I SAW a Sower walking slow  
 Across the earth, from east to west;  
 His hair was white as mountain snow,  
 His head drooped forward on his breast.

With shrivelled hands he flung his seed,  
 Nor ever turned to look behind;  
 Of sight or sound he took no heed;  
 It seemed he was both deaf and blind.

His dim face showed no soul beneath,  
 Yet in my heart I felt a stir,  
 As if I looked upon the sheath,  
 That once had held Excalibur.

I heard, as still the seed he cast,  
 How, crooning to himself, he sung,  
 "I sow again the holy Past,  
 The happy days when I was young.

"Then all was wheat without a tare,  
 Then all was righteous, fair, and true;  
 And I am he whose thoughtful care  
 Shall plant the Old World in the New.

"The fruitful germs I scatter free,  
 With busy hand, while all men sleep;  
 In Europe now, from sea to sea,  
 The nations bless me as they reap."

Then I looked back along his path,  
 And heard the clash of steel on steel,  
 Where man faced man, in deadly wrath,  
 While clanged the tocsin's hurrying peal.

The sky with burning towns flared red,  
 Nearer the noise of fighting rolled,  
 And brothers' blood, by brothers shed,  
 Crept curdling over pavements cold.

Then marked I how each germ of truth  
 Which through the dotard's fingers ran  
 Was mated with a dragon's tooth  
 Whence there sprang up an armed man.

I shouted, but he could not hear;  
 Made signs, but these he could not see;  
 And still, without a doubt or fear,  
 Broadcast he scattered anarchy.

Long to my straining ears the blast  
 Brought faintly back the words he sung:

"I sow again the holy Past,  
The happy days when I was young."

## HUNGER AND COLD

SISTERS two, all praise to you,  
With your faces pinched and blue;  
To the poor man you've been true  
From of old:  
You can speak the keenest word,  
You are sure of being heard,  
From the point you're never stirred,  
Hunger and Cold !

Let sleek statesmen temporize;  
Palsied are their shifts and lies  
When they meet your bloodshot eyes,  
Grim and bold;  
Policy you set at naught,  
In their traps you'll not be caught,  
You're too honest to be bought,  
Hunger and Cold !

Bolt and bar the palace door;  
While the mass of men are poor,  
Naked truth grows more and more  
Uncontrolled;  
You had never yet, I guess,  
Any praise for bashfulness,  
You can visit sans court-dress,  
Hunger and Cold !

While the music fell and rose,  
And the dance reeled to its close,  
Where her round of costly woes  
Fashion strolled,  
I beheld with shuddering fear  
Wolves' eyes through the windows peer;  
Little dream they you are near,  
Hunger and Cold !

When the toiler's heart you clutch,  
Conscience is not valued much,  
He reckns not a bloody smutch  
On his gold:  
Everything to you defers,  
You are potent reasoners,  
At your whisper Treason stirs,  
Hunger and Cold !

Rude comparisons you draw.  
Words refuse to sate your maw,  
Your gaunt limbs the cobweb law  
Cannot hold:

You're not clogged with foolish pride,  
But can seize a right denied:  
Somehow God is on your side,  
Hunger and Cold !

You respect no hoary wrong  
More for having triumphed long;  
Its past victims, haggard throng  
From the mould  
You unbury: swords and spears  
Weaker are than poor men's tears,  
Weaker than your silent years,  
Hunger and Cold !

Let them guard both hall and bower;  
Through the window you will glower,  
Patient till your reckoning hour  
Shall be tolled;  
Cheeks are pale, but hands are red,  
Guiltless blood may chance be shed,  
But ye must and will be fed,  
Hunger and Cold !

God has plans man must not spoil,  
Some were made to starve and toil,  
Some to share the wine and oil,  
We are told:  
Devil's theories are these,  
Stifling hope and love and peace,  
Framed your hideous lusts to please,  
Hunger and Cold !

Scatter ashes on thy head,  
Tears of burning sorrow shed,  
Earth ! and be by Pity led  
To Love's fold;  
Ere they block the very door  
With lean corpses of the poor,  
And will hush for naught but gore,  
Hunger and Cold !

## THE LANDLORD

WHAT boot your houses and your lands ?  
In spite of close-drawn deed and fence,  
Like water, 'twixt your cheated hands,  
They slip into the graveyard's sands,  
And mock your ownership's pretence.

How shall you speak to urge your right,  
Choked with that soil for which you lust ?  
The bit of clay, for whose delight  
You grasp, is mortgaged, too; Death might  
Foreclose this very day in dust.

Fence as you please, this plain poor man,  
 Whose only fields are in his wit,  
 Who shapes the world, as best he can,  
 According to God's higher plan,  
 Owns you, and fences as is fit.

Though yours the rents, his incomes wax  
 By right of eminent domain;  
 From factory tall to woodman's axe,  
 All things on earth must pay their tax,  
 To feed his hungry heart and brain.

He takes you from your easy-chair,  
 And what he plans that you must do;  
 You sleep in down, eat dainty fare, —  
 He mounts his crazy garret-stair  
 And starves, the landlord over you.

Feeding the clods your idlesse drains,  
 You make more green six feet of soil;  
 His fruitful word, like suns and rains,  
 Partakes the seasons' bounteous pains,  
 And toils to lighten human toil.

Your lands, with force or cunning got,  
 Shrink to the measure of the grave;  
 But Death himself abridges not  
 The tenures of almighty thought,  
 The titles of the wise and brave.

### TO A PINE-TREE

Lowell's friend C. F. Briggs called the poet's attention to Coleridge's lines in *The Ancient Mariner*,

"And ice, mast high, came floating by  
 As green as emerald,"

as perhaps the literary justification of "crags of green ice" in the penultimate stanza of this poem, — but maintained nevertheless that the epithet *green* was not true to nature. In his reply Lowell wrote: "I did not have Coleridge's lines in my mind when I wrote my verses. Coleridge had a fine, true eye, and I would gladly accept him (if I wanted any aid) in confirmation. I did trust my own eye. When I was a boy, my favorite sport was sailing upon Fresh Pond in summer, and in winter helping the hardy reapers to get in their harvest of ice, and never was a field of wheat in July of a more lovely green. You have doubtless seen *ice-bugs* (as most people entomologically pronounce it), and they may not be green, though I think they are described as of all colors. But my ice was fresh-water ice, and I am right about it."

FAR up on Katahdin thou towerest,  
 Purple-blue with the distance and vast;  
 Like a cloud o'er the lowlands thou lowerest,  
 That hangs poised on a lull in the blast,  
 To its fall leaning awful.

In the storm, like a prophet o'ermaddened,  
 Thou singest and tossest thy branches;  
 Thy heart with the terror is gladdened,  
 Thou forebodest the dread avalanches,  
 When whole mountains swoop valedward.

In the calm thou o'erstretchest the valleys  
 With thine arms, as if blessings imploring,  
 Like an old king led forth from his palace,  
 When his people to battle are pouring  
 From the city beneath him.

To the lumberer asleep 'neath thy glooming  
 Thou dost sing of wild billows in motion,  
 Till he longs to be swung mid their booming  
 In the tents of the Arabs of ocean,  
 Whose finned isles are their cattle.

For the gale snatches thee for his lyre,  
 With mad hand crashing melody frantic,  
 While he pours forth his mighty desire  
 To leap down on the eager Atlantic,  
 Whose arms stretch to his playmate.

The wild storm makes his lair in thy branches,  
 Swooping thence on the continent under;  
 Like a lion, crouched close on his haunches,  
 There awaiteth his leap the fierce thunder,  
 Growling low with impatience.

Spite of winter, thou keep'st thy green glory,  
 Lusty father of Titans past number!  
 The snow-flakes alone make thee hoary,  
 Nestling close to thy branches in slumber,  
 And thee mantling with silence.

Thou alone know'st the splendor of winter,  
 Mid thy snow-silvered, hushed precipices,  
 Hearing crags of green ice groan and splinter,



And then plunge down the muffled  
abysses  
In the quiet of midnight.

Thou alone know'st the glory of summer,  
Gazing down on thy broad seas of forest,  
On thy subjects that send a proud mur-  
mur  
Up to thee, to their sachem, who tower-  
est  
From thy bleak throne to heaven.

# SI DESCENDERO IN INFERNUM, ADES

O WANDERING dim on the extremest edge  
Of God's bright providence, whose spirits  
sigh  
Drearly in you, like the winter sedge  
That shivers o'er the dead pool stiff and  
dry,  
A thin, sad voice, when the bold wind  
roars by  
From the clear North of Duty, —  
Still by cracked arch and broken shaft I  
trace  
That here was once a shrine and holy place  
Of the supernal Beauty,  
A child's play-altar reared of stones and  
moss,  
With wilted flowers for offering laid  
across,  
Mute recognition of the all-ruling Grace.

How far are ye from the innocent, from  
those  
Whose hearts are as a little lane serene,  
Smooth-heaped from wall to wall with un-  
broke snows,  
Or in the summer blithe with lamb-  
cropped green,  
Save the one track, where naught more  
rude is seen  
Than the plump wain at even  
Bringing home four months' sunshine  
bound in sheaves !  
How far are ye from those ! yet who be-  
lieves  
That ye can shut out heaven ?  
Your souls partake its influence, not in  
vain  
Nor all unconscious, as that silent lane  
Its drift of noiseless apple-blooms receives.

Looking within myself, I note how thin  
A plank of station, chance, or prosperous  
fate,  
Doth fence me from the clutching waves of  
sin;  
In my own heart I find the worst man's  
mate,  
And see not dimly the smooth-hing'd  
gate  
That opes to those abysses  
Where ye grope darkly, — ye who never  
knew  
On your young hearts love's consecrating  
dew,  
Or felt a mother's kisses,  
Or home's restraining tendrils round you  
curled;  
Ah, side by side with heart's-ease in this  
world  
The fatal nightshade grows and bitter rue !  
One band ye cannot break, — the force that  
clips  
And grasps your circles to the central  
light;  
Yours is the prodigal comet's long ellipse,  
Self-exiled to the farthest verge of  
night;  
Yet strives with you no less that inward  
might  
No sin hath e'er imbruted;  
The god in you the creed-dimmed eye  
eludes;  
The Law brooks not to have its solitudes  
By bigot feet polluted;  
Yet they who watch your God-compelled  
return  
May see your happy perihelion burn  
Where the calm sun his unfledged planets  
broods.

## TO THE PAST

WONDROUS and awful are thy silent halls,  
O kingdom of the past !  
There lie the bygone ages in their palls,  
Guarded by shadows vast;  
There all is hushed and breathless,  
Save when some image of old error falls  
Earth worshipped once as deathless.  
There sits drear Egypt, mid beleaguering  
sands,  
Half woman and half beast,

The burnt-out torch within her mouldering  
hands  
That once lit all the East;  
A dotard bleared and hoary,  
There Asser crouches o'er the blackened  
brands  
Of Asia's long-quenched glory.

Still as a city buried 'neath the sea  
Thy courts and temples stand;  
Idle as forms on wind-waved tapestry  
Of saints and heroes grand,  
Thy phantasms grope and shiver,  
Or watch the loose shores crumbling si-  
lently  
Into Time's gnawing river.

Titanic shapes with faces blank and dun,  
Of their old godhead lorn,  
Gaze on the embers of the sunken sun,  
Which they misdeem for morn;  
And yet the eternal sorrow  
In their unmonarched eyes says day is done  
Without the hope of morrow.

O realm of silence and of swart eclipse,  
The shapes that haunt thy gloom  
Make signs to us and move their withered  
lips  
Across the gulf of doom;  
Yet all their sound and motion  
Bring no more freight to us than wraiths  
of ships  
On the mirage's ocean.

And if sometimes a moaning wandereth  
From out thy desolate halls,  
If some grim shadow of thy living death  
Across our sunshine falls  
And scares the world to error,  
The eternal life sends forth melodious  
breath  
To chase the misty terror.

Thy mighty clamors, wars, and world-  
noised deeds  
Are silent now in dust,  
Gone like a tremble of the huddling reeds  
Beneath some sudden gust;  
Thy forms and creeds have vanished,  
Tossed out to wither like unsightly weeds  
From the world's garden banished.

Whatever of true life there was in thee  
Leaps in our age's veins;

Wield still thy bent and wrinkled em-  
pery,  
And shake thine idle chains;—  
To thee thy dross is clinging,  
For us thy martyrs die, thy prophets  
see,  
Thy poets still are singing.

Here, mid the bleak waves of our strife  
and care,  
Float the green Fortunate Isles  
Where all thy hero-spirits dwell, and share  
Our martyrdoms and toils;  
The present moves attended  
With all of brave and excellent and fair  
That made the old time splendid.

### TO THE FUTURE

O LAND of Promise! from what Pisgah's  
height  
Can I behold thy stretch of peaceful  
bowers,  
Thy golden harvests flowing out of sight,  
Thy nestled homes and sun-illuminated  
towers?  
Gazing upon the sunset's high-heaped  
gold,  
Its crags of opal and of chrysolite,  
Its deeps on deeps of glory, that un-  
fold  
Still brightening abysses,  
And blazing precipices,  
Whence but a scanty leap it seems to  
heaven,  
Sometimes a glimpse is given  
Of thy more gorgeous realm, thy more un-  
stinted blisses.

O Land of Quiet! to thy shore the surf  
Of the perturbed Present rolls and sleeps;  
Our storms breathe soft as June upon thy  
surf  
And lure out blossoms; to thy bosom  
leaps,  
As to a mother's, the o'erwearied heart,  
Hearing far off and dim the toiling mart,  
The hurrying feet, the curses without  
number,  
And, circled with the glow Elysian  
Of thine exulting vision,  
Out of its very cares woos charms for  
peace and slumber.

To thee the earth lifts up her fettered  
 hands  
 And cries for vengeance; with a pitying  
 smile  
 Thou blestest her, and she forgets her  
 bands,  
 And her old woe-worn face a little while  
 Grows young and noble; unto thee the  
 Oppressor  
 Looks, and is dumb with awe;  
 The eternal law,  
 Which makes the crime its own blindfold  
 redresser,  
 Shadows his heart with perilous foreboding,  
 And he can see the grim-eyed Doom  
 From out the trembling gloom  
 Its silent-footed steeds towards his palace  
 goading.

What promises hast thou for Poets' eyes,  
 A-weary of the turmoil and the wrong !  
 To all their hopes what overjoyed replies !  
 What undreamed ecstasies for blissful  
 song !  
 Thy happy plains no war-trump's brawling  
 clangor  
 Disturbs, and fools the poor to hate the  
 poor;  
 The humble glares not on the high with  
 anger;  
 Love leaves no grudge at less, no greed  
 for more;  
 In vain strives Self the godlike sense to  
 smother;  
 From the soul's deeps  
 It throbs and leaps;  
 The noble 'neath foul rags beholds his long-  
 lost brother.

To thee the Martyr looketh, and his fires  
 Unlock their fangs and leave his spirit  
 free;  
 To thee the Poet mid his toil aspires,  
 And grief and hunger climb about his  
 knee,  
 Welcome as children; thou upholdest  
 The lone Inventor by his demon haunted;  
 The Prophet cries to thee when hearts are  
 coldest,  
 And gazing o'er the midnight's bleak  
 abyss,  
 Sees the drowsed soul awaken at thy  
 kiss,  
 And stretch its happy arms and leap up  
 disenchanted.

Thou bringest vengeance, but so loving-  
 kindly  
 The guilty thinks it pity; taught by thee,  
 Fierce tyrants drop the scourges where-  
 with blindly  
 Their own souls they were scarring; con-  
 querors see  
 With horror in their hands the accursed  
 spear  
 That tore the meek One's side on Cal-  
 vary,  
 And from their trophies shrink with  
 ghastly fear;  
 Thou, too, art the Forgiver,  
 The beauty of man's soul to man reveal-  
 ing;  
 The arrows from thy quiver  
 Pierce Error's guilty heart, but only pierce  
 for healing.

Oh, whither, whither, glory-wing'd dreams,  
 From out Life's sweat and turmoil would  
 ye bear me ?  
 Shut, gates of Fancy, on your golden  
 gleams,—  
 This agony of hopeless contrast spare me!  
 Fade, cheating glow, and leave me to my  
 night !  
 He is a coward, who would borrow  
 A charm against the present sorrow  
 From the vague Future's promise of de-  
 light:  
 As life's alarums nearer roll,  
 The ancestral buckler calls,  
 Self-clanging from the walls  
 In the high temple of the soul;  
 Where are most sorrows, there the poet's  
 sphere is,  
 To feed the soul with patience,  
 To heal its desolations  
 With words of unshorn truth, with love  
 that never wearies.

HEBE

I SAW the twinkle of white feet,  
 I saw the flash of robes descending;  
 Before her ran an influence fleet,  
 That bowed my heart like barley bending.

As, in bare fields, the searching bees  
 Pilot to blooms beyond our finding,  
 It led me on, by sweet degrees  
 Joy's simple honey-cells unbinding.

Those Graces were that seemed grim  
Fates;  
With nearer love the sky leaned o'er me;  
The long-sought Secret's golden gates  
On musical hinges swung before me.

I saw the brimmed bowl in her grasp  
Thrilling with godhood; like a lover  
I sprang the proffered life to clasp; —  
The beaker fell; the luck was over.

The Earth has drunk the vintage up;  
What boots it patch the goblet's splinters?

Can Summer fill the icy cup,  
Whose treacherous crystal is but Winter's?

O spendthrift haste! await the Gods;  
The nectar crowns the lips of Patience;  
Haste scatters on unthankful sods  
The immortal gift in vain libations.

Coy Hebe flies from those that woo,  
And shuns the hands would seize upon her;  
Follow thy life, and she will sue  
To pour for thee the cup of honor.

### THE SEARCH

I WENT to seek for Christ,  
And Nature seemed so fair  
That first the woods and fields my youth  
enticed,  
And I was sure to find him there:  
The temple I forsook,  
And to the solitude  
Allegiance paid; but winter came and  
shook

The crown and purple from my wood;  
His snows, like desert sands, with scornful  
drift,

Besieged the columned aisle and palace-  
gate;  
My Thebes, cut deep with many a solemn  
rift,

But epitaphed her own sepulchred state:  
Then I remember whom I went to seek,  
And blessed blunt Winter for his counsel  
bleak.

Back to the world I turned,  
For Christ, I said, is King;  
So the cramped alley and the hut I  
spurned,

As far beneath his sojourning:  
Mid power and wealth I sought,  
But found no trace of him,  
And all the costly offerings I had brought  
With sudden rust and mould grew dim:  
I found his tomb, indeed, where, by their  
laws,  
All must on stated days themselves im-  
prison,  
Mocking with bread a dead creed's grin-  
ning jaws,  
Witless how long the life had thence  
arisen;  
Due sacrifice to this they set apart,  
Prizing it more than Christ's own living  
heart.

So from my feet the dust  
Of the proud World I shook;  
Then came dear Love and shared with me  
his crust,

And half my sorrow's burden took.  
After the World's soft bed,  
Its rich and dainty fare,  
Like down seemed Love's coarse pillow to  
my head,

His cheap food seemed as manna rare;  
Fresh-trodden prints of bare and bleeding  
feet,

Turned to the heedless city whence I  
came,  
Hard by I saw, and springs of worship  
sweet

Gushed from my cleft heart smitten by  
the same;  
Love looked me in the face and spake no  
words,

But straight I knew those footprints were  
the Lord's.

I followed where they led,  
And in a hovel rude,  
With naught to fence the weather from  
his head,

The King I sought for meekly stood;  
A naked, hungry child  
Clung round his gracious knee,  
And a poor hunted slave looked up and  
smiled

To bless the smile that set him free;  
New miracles I saw his presence do, —  
No more I knew the hovel bare and poor,  
The gathered chips into a wood-pile grew  
The broken morsel swelled to goodly  
store;



I knelt and wept: my Christ no more I seek,  
His throne is with the outcast and the weak.

## THE PRESENT CRISIS

Dated December, 1844.

WHEN a deed is done for Freedom, through  
the broad earth's aching breast  
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling  
on from east to west,  
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels  
the soul within him climb  
To the awful verge of manhood, as the  
energy sublime  
Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the  
thorny stem of Time.

Through the walls of hut and palace shoots  
the instantaneous throe,  
When the travail of the Ages wrings  
earth's systems to and fro;  
At the birth of each new Era, with a recog-  
nizing start,  
Nation wildly looks at nation, standing  
with mute lips apart,  
And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child  
leaps beneath the Future's heart.

So the Evil's triumph sendeth, with a  
terror and a chill,  
Under continent to continent, the sense of  
coming ill,  
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels  
his sympathies with God  
In hot tear-drops ebbing earthward, to be  
drunk up by the sod,  
Till a corpse crawls round unburied, delv-  
ing in the nobler clod.

For mankind are one in spirit, and an in-  
stinct bears along,  
Round the earth's electric circle, the swift  
flash of right or wrong;  
Whether conscious or unconscious, yet  
Humanity's vast frame  
Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the  
gush of joy or shame;—  
In the gain or loss of one race all the rest  
have equal claim.

Once to every man and nation comes the  
moment to decide,

In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for  
the good or evil side;  
Some great cause, God's new Messiah,  
offering each the bloom or blight,  
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the  
sheep upon the right,  
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that  
darkness and that light.

Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose  
party thou shalt stand,  
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes  
the dust against our land?  
Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 'tis  
Truth alone is strong,  
And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see  
around her throng  
Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield  
her from all wrong.

Backward look across the ages and the  
beacon-moments see,  
That, like peaks of some sunk continent,  
jut through Oblivion's sea;  
Not an ear in court or market for the low  
foreboding cry  
Of those Crises, God's stern winnowers,  
from whose feet earth's chaff must fly;  
Never shows the choice momentous till the  
judgment hath passed by.

Careless seems the great Avenger; history's  
pages but record  
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt  
old systems and the Word;  
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong for-  
ever on the throne,—  
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, be-  
hind the dim unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping  
watch above his own.

We see dimly in the Present what is small  
and what is great,  
Slow of faith how weak an arm may turn  
the iron helm of fate,  
But the soul is still oracular; amid the  
market's din,  
List the ominous stern whisper from the  
Delphic cave within,—  
"They enslave their children's children who  
make compromise with sin."

Slavery, the earth-born Cyclops, fellest of  
the giant brood,

Sons of brutish Force and Darkness, who  
 have drenched the earth with blood,  
 Famished in his self-made desert, blinded  
 by our purer day,  
 Gropes in yet unblasted regions for his  
 miserable prey; —  
 Shall we guide his gory fingers where our  
 helpless children play?

Then to side with Truth is noble when we  
 share her wretched crust,  
 Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and  
 't is prosperous to be just;  
 Then it is the brave man chooses, while the  
 coward stands aside,  
 Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord  
 is crucified,  
 And the multitude make virtue of the faith  
 they had denied.

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes, —  
 they were souls that stood alone,  
 While the men they agonized for hurled  
 the contumelious stone,  
 Stood serene, and down the future saw the  
 golden beam incline  
 To the side of perfect justice, mastered by  
 their faith divine,  
 By one man's plain truth to manhood and  
 to God's supreme design.

By the light of burning heretics Christ's  
 bleeding feet I track,  
 Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the  
 cross that turns not back,  
 And these mounts of anguish number how  
 each generation learned  
 One new word of that grand *Credo* which  
 in prophet-hearts hath burned  
 Since the first man stood God-conquered  
 with his face to heaven upturned.

For Humanity sweeps onward: where to-  
 day the martyr stands,  
 On the morrow crouches Judas with the  
 silver in his hands;  
 Far in front the cross stands ready and the  
 crackling fagots burn,  
 While the hooting mob of yesterday in  
 silent awe return  
 To glean up the scattered ashes into His-  
 tory's golden urn.

'T is as easy to be heroes as to sit the idle  
 slaves

Of a legendary virtue carved upon our  
 father's graves,  
 Worshippers of light ancestral make the  
 present light a crime; —  
 Was the Mayflower launched by cowards,  
 steered by men behind their time?  
 Turn those tracks toward Past or Future,  
 that make Plymouth Rock sublime?

They were men of present valor, stalwart  
 old iconoclasts,  
 Unconvinced by axe or gibbet that all vir-  
 tue was the Past's;  
 But we make their truth our falsehood,  
 thinking that hath made us free,  
 Hoarding it in mouldy parchments, while  
 our tender spirits flee  
 The rude grasp of that great Impulse which  
 drove them across the sea.

They have rights who dare maintain them;  
 we are traitors to our sires,  
 Smothering in their holy ashes Freedom's  
 new-lit altar-fires;  
 Shall we make their creed our jailer?  
 Shall we, in our haste to slay,  
 From the tombs of the old prophets steal  
 the funeral lamps away  
 To light up the martyr-fagots round the  
 prophets of to-day?

New occasions teach new duties; Time  
 makes ancient good uncouth;  
 They must upward still, and onward, who  
 would keep abreast of Truth;  
 Lo, before us gleam her camp-fires! we  
 ourselves must Pilgrims be,  
 Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly  
 through the desperate winter sea,  
 Nor attempt the Future's portal with the  
 Past's blood-rusted key.

#### AN INDIAN-SUMMER REVERIE

The reader familiar with Lowell's life will readily recognize the local references which occur in this poem. To others it may be worth while to point out that the village smithy is the same as that commemorated by Longfellow, that Allston lived in the section of Cambridge known as Cambridgeport, that some of the old willows at the causey's end still stand, and that the group is the one which gave the name to *Under the Willows*.

WHAT visionary tints the year puts on,  
 When falling leaves falter through motionless air  
 Or humbly cling and shiver to be gone !  
 How shimmer the low flats and pastures bare,  
 As with her nectar Hebe Autumn fills  
 The bowl between me and those distant hills,  
 And smiles and shakes abroad her misty,  
 tremulous hair !

No more the landscape holds its  
 wealth apart,  
 Making me poorer in my poverty,  
 But mingles with my senses and my heart;  
 My own projected spirit seems to me  
 In her own reverie the world to steep;  
 'T is she that waves to sympathetic sleep,  
 Moving, as she is moved, each field and hill  
 and tree.

How fuse and mix, with what unfelt  
 degrees,  
 Clasped by the faint horizon's languid  
 arms,  
 Each into each, the hazy distances !  
 The softened season all the landscape  
 charms;  
 Those hills, my native village that  
 embay,  
 In waves of dreamier purple roll away,  
 And floating in mirage seem all the glim-  
 mering farms.

Far distant sounds the hidden chicka-  
 dee  
 Close at my side; far distant sound the  
 leaves;  
 The fields seem fields of dream, where  
 Memory  
 Wanders like gleaning Ruth; and as the  
 sheaves  
 Of wheat and barley wavered in the  
 eye  
 Of Boaz as the maiden's glow went by,  
 So tremble and seem remote all things the  
 sense receives.

The cock's shrill trump that tells of  
 scattered corn,  
 Passed breezily on by all his flapping  
 mates,

Faint and more faint, from barn to  
 barn is borne,  
 Southward, perhaps to far Magellan's  
 Straits;  
 Dimly I catch the throb of distant  
 flails;  
 Silently overhead the hen-hawk sails,  
 With watchful, measuring eye, and for his  
 quarry waits.

The sobered robin, hunger-silent now,  
 Seeks cedar-berries blue, his autumn  
 cheer;  
 The chipmunk, on the shingly shag-  
 bark's bough  
 Now saws, now lists with downward eye  
 and ear,  
 Then drops his nut, and, cheeping,  
 with a bound  
 Whisks to his winding fastness under-  
 ground;  
 The clouds like swans drift down the  
 streaming atmosphere.

O'er yon bare knoll the pointed cedar  
 shadows  
 Drowse on the crisp, gray moss; the  
 ploughman's call  
 Creeps faint as smoke from black,  
 fresh-furrowed meadows;  
 The single crow a single caw lets fall;  
 And all around me every bush and  
 tree  
 Says Autumn's here, and Winter soon  
 will be,  
 Who snows his soft, white sleep and silence  
 over all.

The birch, most shy and ladylike of  
 trees,  
 Her poverty, as best she may, retrieves,  
 And hints at her foregone gentilities  
 With some saved relics of her wealth of  
 leaves;  
 The swamp-oak, with his royal purple  
 on,  
 Glares red as blood across the sinking  
 sun,  
 As one who prouder to a falling fortune  
 cleaves.

He looks a sachem, in red blanket  
 wrapt,  
 Who, mid some council of the sad-garbed  
 whites,

Erect and stern, in his own memories  
lapt,  
With distant eye broods over other  
sights,  
Sees the hushed wood the city's flare  
replace,  
The wounded turf heal o'er the rail-  
way's trace,  
And roams the savage Past of his un-  
dwindled rights.

The red-oak, softer-grained, yields all  
for lost,  
And, with his crumpled foliage stiff and  
d-y,  
After the first betrayal of the frost,  
Rebuffs the kiss of the relenting sky;  
The chestnuts, lavish of their long-hid  
gold,  
To the faint Summer, beggared now  
and old,  
Pour back the sunshine hoarded 'neath her  
favoring eye.

The ash her purple drops forgivingly  
And sadly, breaking not the general  
hush;  
The maple-swamps glow like a sunset  
sea,  
Each leaf a ripple with its separate  
flush;  
All round the wood's edge creeps the  
skirting blaze  
Of bushes low, as when, on cloudy  
days,  
Ere the rain fall, the cautious farmer burns  
his brush.

O'er yon low wall, which guards one  
unkempt zone,  
Where vines and weeds and scrub-oaks  
intertwine  
Safe from the plough, whose rough,  
discordant stone  
Is massed to one soft gray by lichens  
fine,  
The tangled blackberry, crossed and  
recrossed, weaves  
A prickly network of ensanguined  
leaves;  
Hard by, with coral beads, the prim black-  
alders shine.

Pillaring with flame this crumbling  
boundary,

Whose loose blocks topple 'neath the  
ploughboy's foot,  
Who, with each sense shut fast except  
the eye,  
Creeps close and scares the jay he hoped  
to shoot,  
The woodbine up the elm's straight  
stem aspires,  
Coiling it, harmless, with autumnal  
fires;  
In the ivy's paler blaze the martyr oak  
stands mute.

Below, the Charles, a stripe of nether  
sky,  
Now hid by rounded apple-trees between,  
Whose gaps the misplaced sail sweeps  
bellying by,  
Now flickering golden through a wood-  
land screen,  
Then spreading out, at his next turn  
beyond,  
A silver circle like an inland pond —  
Slips seaward silently through marshes  
purple and green.

Dear marshes! vain to him the gift of  
sight  
Who cannot in their various incomes share,  
From every season drawn, of shade  
and light,  
Who sees in them but levels brown and  
bare;  
Each change of storm or sunshine  
scatters free  
On them its largess of variety,  
For Nature with cheap means still works  
her wonders rare.

In Spring they lie one broad expanse  
of green,  
O'er which the light winds run with  
glimmering feet:  
Here, yellower stripes track out the  
creek unseen,  
There, darker growths o'er hidden  
ditches meet;  
And purpler stains show where the  
blossoms crowd,  
As if the silent shadow of a cloud  
Hung there becalmed, with the next breath  
to fleet.

All round, upon the river's slippery  
edge,



Witching to deeper calm the drowsy tide,  
 Whispers and leans the breeze-entangling sedge;  
 Through emerald glooms the lingering waters slide,  
 Or, sometimes wavering, throw back the sun,  
 And the stiff banks in eddies melt and run  
 Of dimpling light, and with the current seem to glide.

In Summer 't is a blithesome sight to see,  
 As, step by step, with measured swing, they pass,  
 The wide-ranked mowers wading to the knee,  
 Their sharp scythes panting through the wiry grass;  
 Then, stretched beneath a rick's shade in a ring,  
 Their nooning take, while one begins to sing  
 A stave that droops and dies 'neath the close sky of brass.

Meanwhile that devil-may-care, the bobolink,  
 Remembering duty, in mid-quaver stops  
 Just ere he sweeps o'er rapture's tremulous brink,  
 And 'twixt the winrows most demurely drops,  
 A decorous bird of business, who provides  
 For his brown mate and fledglings six besides,  
 And looks from right to left, a farmer mid his crops.

Another change subdues them in the Fall,  
 But saddens not; they still show merrier tints,  
 Though sober russet seems to cover all;  
 When the first sunshine through their dew-drops glints,  
 Look how the yellow clearness, streamed across,  
 Redeems with rarer hues the season's loss,  
 As Dawn's feet there had touched and left their rosy prints.

Or come when sunset gives its freshened zest,  
 Lean o'er the bridge and let the ruddy thrill,  
 While the shorn sun swells down the hazy west,  
 Glow opposite; — the marshes drink their fill  
 And swoon with purple veins, then slowly fade  
 Through pink to brown, as eastward moves the shade,  
 Lengthening with stealthy creep, of Simond's darkening hill.

Later, and yet ere Winter wholly shuts,  
 Ere through the first dry snow the runner grates,  
 And the loath cart-wheel screams in slippery ruts,  
 While firmer ice the eager boy awaits,  
 Trying each buckle and strap beside the fire,  
 And until bedtime plays with his desire,  
 Twenty times putting on and off his new-bought skates; —

Then, every morn, the river's banks shine bright  
 With smooth plate-armor, treacherous and frail,  
 By the frost's clinking hammers forged at night,  
 'Gainst which the lances of the sun prevail,  
 Giving a pretty emblem of the day  
 When guiltier arms in light shall melt away,  
 And states shall move free-limbed, loosed from war's cramping mail.

And now those waterfalls the ebbing river  
 Twice every day creates on either side  
 Tinkle, as through their fresh-sparred grots they shiver  
 In grass-arched channels to the sun denied;  
 High flaps in sparkling blue the far-heard crow,  
 The silvered flats gleam frostily below,  
 Suddenly drops the gull and breaks the glassy tide.

But crowned in turn by vying seasons  
 three,  
 Their winter halo hath a fuller ring;  
 This glory seems to rest immovably, —  
 The others were too fleet and vanish-  
 ing;  
 When the hid tide is at its highest  
 flow,  
 O'er marsh and stream one breathless  
 trance of snow  
 With brooding fulness awes and hushes  
 everything.

The sunshine seems blown off by the  
 bleak wind,  
 As pale as formal candles lit by day;  
 Gropes to the sea the river dumb and  
 blind;  
 The brown ricks, snow-thatched by the  
 storm in play,  
 Show pearly breakers combing o'er  
 their lee,  
 White crests as of some just enchanted  
 sea,  
 Checked in their maddest leap and hanging  
 poised midway.

But when the eastern blow, with rain  
 aslant,  
 From mid-sea's prairies green and rolling  
 plains  
 Drives in his wallowing herds of bil-  
 lows gaunt,  
 And the roused Charles remembers in  
 his veins  
 Old Ocean's blood and snaps his  
 gyves of frost,  
 That tyrannous silence on the shores is  
 tost  
 In dreary wreck, and crumbling desolation  
 reigns.

Edgewise or flat, in Druid-like device,  
 With leaden pools between or gullies  
 bare,  
 The blocks lie strewn, a bleak Stone-  
 henge of ice;  
 No life, no sound, to break the grim  
 despair,  
 Save sullen plunge, as through the  
 sedges stiff  
 Down crackles riverward some thaw-  
 sapped cliff,  
 Or when the close-wedged fields of ice  
 crunch here and there.

But let me turn from fancy-pictured  
 scenes  
 To that whose pastoral calm before me  
 lies:  
 Here nothing harsh or rugged inter-  
 venes;  
 The early evening with her misty dyes  
 Smooths off the ravelled edges of the  
 night,  
 Relieves the distant with her cooler sky,  
 And tones the landscape down, and soothes  
 the wearied eyes.

There gleams my native village, dear  
 to me,  
 Though higher change's waves each day  
 are seen,  
 Whelming fields famed in boyhood's  
 history,  
 Sanding with houses the diminished  
 green;  
 There, in red brick, which softening  
 time defies,  
 Stand square and stiff the Muses'  
 factories; —  
 How with my life knit up is every well-  
 known scene !

Flow on, dear river ! not alone you flow  
 To outward sight, and through your  
 marshes wind;  
 Fed from the mystic springs of long-  
 ago,  
 Your twin flows silent through my world  
 of mind:  
 Grow dim, dear marshes, in the even-  
 ing's gray !  
 Before my inner sight ye stretch away,  
 And will forever, though these fleshly eyes  
 grow blind.

Beyond the hillock's house-bespotted  
 swell,  
 Where Gothic chapels house the horse  
 and chaise,  
 Where quiet cits in Grecian temples  
 dwell,  
 Where Coptic tombs resound with prayer  
 and praise,  
 Where dust and mud the equal year  
 divide,  
 There gentle Allston lived, and  
 wrought, and died,  
 Transfiguring street and shop with his  
 illumined gaze.

*Virgilium vidi tantum*, — I have seen  
 But as a boy, who looks alike on all,  
 That misty hair, that fine Undine-like  
 mien,  
 Tremulous as down to feeling's faintest  
 call; —  
 Ah, dear old homestead! count it to  
 thy fame  
 That thither many times the Painter  
 came; —  
 One elm yet bears his name, a feathery tree  
 and tall.

Swiftly the present fades in memory's  
 glow, —  
 Our only sure possession is the past;  
 The village blacksmith died a month  
 ago,  
 And dim to me the forge's roaring blast;  
 Soon fire-new mediævals we shall  
 see  
 Oust the black smithy from its chest-  
 nut-tree,  
 And that hewn down, perhaps, the beehive  
 green and vast.

How many times, prouder than king  
 on throne,  
 Loosed from the village school-dame's  
 A's and B's,  
 Panting have I the creaky bellows  
 blown,  
 And watched the pent volcano's red in-  
 crease,  
 Then paused to see the ponderous  
 sledge, brought down  
 By that hard arm voluminous and  
 brown,  
 From the white iron swarm its golden van-  
 ishing bees.

Dear native town! whose choking elms  
 each year  
 With eddying dust before their time turn  
 gray,  
 Pining for rain, — to me thy dust is  
 dear;  
 It glorifies the eve of summer day,  
 And when the westerling sun half  
 sunken burns,  
 The mote-thick air to deepest orange  
 turns,  
 The westward horseman rides through  
 clouds of gold away,

So palpable, I've seen those unshorn  
 few,  
 The six old willows at the causey's end  
 (Such trees Paul Potter never dreamed  
 nor drew),  
 Through this dry mist their checkering  
 shadows send,  
 Striped, here and there, with many a  
 long-drawn thread,  
 Where streamed through leafy chinks  
 the trembling red,  
 Past which, in one bright trail, the hang-  
 bird's flashes blend.

Yes, dearer far thy dust than all that  
 e'er,  
 Beneath the awarded crown of victory,  
 Gilded the blown Olympic charioteer;  
 Though lightly prized the ribboned  
 parchments three,  
 Yet *collegisse juvat*, I am glad  
 That here what colleging was mine I  
 had, —  
 It linked another tie, dear native town,  
 with thee!

Nearer art thou than simply native  
 earth,  
 My dust with thine concedes a deeper  
 tie;  
 A closer claim thy soil may well put  
 forth,  
 Something of kindred more than sympa-  
 thy;  
 For in thy bounds I reverently laid  
 away  
 That blinding anguish of forsaken  
 clay,  
 That title I seemed to have in earth and  
 sea and sky,

That portion of my life more choice to  
 me  
 (Though brief, yet in itself so round and  
 whole)  
 Than all the imperfect residue can  
 be; —  
 The Artist saw his statue of the soul  
 Was perfect; so, with one regretful  
 stroke,  
 The earthen model into fragments  
 broke,  
 And without her the impoverished seasons  
 roll.

## THE GROWTH OF THE LEGEND

## A FRAGMENT

A LEGEND that grew in the forest's hush  
 Slowly as tear-drops gather and gush,  
 When a word some poet chanced to say  
 Ages ago, in his careless way,  
 Brings our youth back to us out of its  
 shroud

Clearly as under yon thunder-cloud  
 I see that white sea-gull. It grew and  
 grew,  
 From the pine-trees gathering a sombre  
 hue,  
 Till it seems a mere murmur out of the  
 vast

Norwegian forests of the past;  
 And it grew itself like a true Northern  
 pine,  
 First a little slender line,  
 Like a mermaid's green eyelash, and then  
 anon

A stem that a tower might rest upon,  
 Standing spear-straight in the waist-deep  
 moss,

Its bony roots clutching around and across,  
 As if they would tear up earth's heart in  
 their grasp

Ere the storm should uproot them or make  
 them unclasp;

Its cloudy boughs singing, as suiteth the  
 pine,

To snow-bearded sea-kings old songs of the  
 brine,

Till they straightened and let their staves  
 fall to the floor,

Hearing waves moan again on the perilous  
 shore

Of Vinland, perhaps, while their prow  
 groped its way

'Twixt the frothed gnashing tusks of some  
 ship-crunching bay.

So, pine-like, the legend grew, strong-  
 limbed and tall,

As the Gypsy child grows that eats crusts  
 in the hall;

It sucked the whole strength of the earth  
 and the sky,

Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, all brought  
 it supply;

'T was a natural growth, and stood fear-  
 lessly there,

True part of the landscape as sea, land, and  
 air;

For it grew in good times, ere the fashion  
 it was

To force these wild births of the woods  
 under glass,

And so, if 't is told as it should be told,  
 Though 't were sung under Venice's moon-  
 light of gold,

You would hear the old voice of its mother,  
 the pine,

Murmur sealike and northern through  
 every line,

And the verses should grow, self-sustained  
 and free,

Round the vibrating stem of the melody,  
 Like the lithe moonlit limbs of the parent  
 tree.

Yes, the pine is the mother of legends;  
 what food

For their grim roots is left when the thou-  
 sand-year'd wood,

The dim-aisled cathedral, whose tall arches  
 spring

Light, sinewy, graceful, firm-set as the  
 wing

From Michael's white shoulder, is hewn and  
 defaced

By iconoclast axes in desperate waste,  
 And its wrecks seek the ocean it prophesied  
 long,

Cassandra-like, crooning its mystical song?  
 Then the legends go with them, — even yet  
 on the sea

A wild virtue is left in the touch of the tree,  
 And the sailor's night-watches are thrilled  
 to the core

With the lineal offspring of Odin and Thor.

Yes, wherever the pine-wood has never let  
 in,

Since the day of creation, the light and the  
 din

Of manifold life, but has safely conveyed  
 From the midnight primeval its armful of  
 shade,

And has kept the weird Past with its child-  
 faith alive

Mid the hum and the stir of To-day's busy  
 hive,

There the legend takes root in the age-  
 gathered gloom,

And its murmurous boughs for their sagas  
 find room.



Where Aroostook, far-heard, seems to sob  
 as he goes  
 Groping down to the sea 'neath his mountainous snows;  
 Where the lake's froze Sahara of never-tracked white,  
 When the crack shoots across it, complains to the night  
 With a long, lonely moan, that leagues northward is lost,  
 As the ice shrinks away from the tread of the frost;  
 Where the lumberers sit by the log-fires that throw  
 Their own threatening shadows far round o'er the snow,  
 When the wolf howls aloof, and the wavering glare  
 Flashes out from the blackness the eyes of the bear,  
 When the wood's huge recesses, half-lighted, supply  
 A canvas where Fancy her mad brush may try,  
 Blotting in giant Horrors that venture not down  
 Through the right-angled streets of the brisk, whitewashed town,  
 But skulk in the depths of the measureless wood  
 Mid the Dark's creeping whispers that curdle the blood,  
 When the eye, glanced in dread o'er the shoulder, may dream,  
 Ere it shrinks to the camp-fire's companioning gleam,  
 That it saw the fierce ghost of the Red Man crouch back  
 To the shroud of the tree-trunk's invincible black;  
 There the old shapes crowd thick round the pine-shadowed camp,  
 Which shun the keen gleam of the scholarly lamp,  
 And the seed of the legend finds true Norland ground,  
 While the border-tale's told and the can-teen flits round.

## A CONTRAST

Thy love thou sentest oft to me,  
 And still as oft I thrust it back;  
 Thy messengers I could not see

In those who everything did lack,  
 The poor, the outcast and the black.

Pride held his hand before mine eyes,  
 The world with flattery stuffed mine ears;  
 I looked to see a monarch's guise,  
 Nor dreamed thy love would knock for years,  
 Poor, naked, fettered, full of tears.

Yet, when I sent my love to thee,  
 Thou with a smile didst take it in,  
 And entertain'dst it royally,  
 Though grimed with earth, with hunger thin,  
 And leprous with the taint of sin.

Now every day thy love I meet,  
 As o'er the earth it wanders wide,  
 With weary step and bleeding feet,  
 Still knocking at the heart of pride  
 And offering grace, though still denied.

## EXTREME UNCTION

Go! leave me, Priest; my soul would be  
 Alone with the consoler, Death;  
 Far sadder eyes than thine will see  
 This crumbling clay yield up its breath;  
 These shrivelled hands have deeper stains  
 Than holy oil can cleanse away,  
 Hands that have plucked the world's coarse gains  
 As erst they plucked the flowers of May.

Call, if thou canst, to these gray eyes  
 Some faith from youth's traditions wrung;  
 This fruitless husk which dustward dries  
 Hath been a heart once, hath been young;  
 On this bowed head the awful Past  
 Once laid its consecrating bands;  
 The Future in its purpose vast  
 Paused, waiting my supreme commands.

But look! whose shadows block the door?  
 Who are those two that stand aloof?  
 See! on my hands this freshening gore  
 Writes o'er again its crimson proof!  
 My looked-for death-bed guests are met;  
 There my dead Youth doth wring its hands,  
 And there, with eyes that goad me yet,  
 The ghost of my Ideal stands!

God bends from out the deep and says,  
 "I gave thee the great gift of life;  
 Wast thou not called in many ways?  
 Are not my earth and heaven at strife?  
 I gave thee of my seed to sow,  
 Bringest thou me my hundred-fold?"  
 Can I look up with face aglow,  
 And answer, "Father, here is gold?"

I have been innocent; God knows  
 When first this wasted life began,  
 Not grape with grape more kindly grows,  
 Than I with every brother-man:  
 Now here I gasp; what lose my kind,  
 When this fast ebbing breath shall  
 part?  
 What bands of love and service bind  
 This being to a brother heart?

Christ still was wandering o'er the earth  
 Without a place to lay his head;  
 He found free welcome at my hearth,  
 He shared my cup and broke my bread:  
 Now, when I hear those steps sublime,  
 That bring the other world to this,  
 My snake-turned nature, sunk in slime,  
 Starts sideway with defiant hiss.

Upon the hour when I was born,  
 God said, "Another man shall be,"  
 And the great Maker did not scorn  
 Out of himself to fashion me;  
 He sunned me with his ripening looks,  
 And Heaven's rich instincts in me grew,  
 As effortless as woodland nooks  
 Send violets up and paint them blue.

Yes, I who now, with angry tears,  
 Am exiled back to brutish clod,  
 Have borne unquenched for fourscore years  
 A spark of the eternal God;  
 And to what end? How yield I back  
 The trust for such high uses given?  
 Heaven's light hath but revealed a track  
 Whereby to crawl away from heaven.

Men think it is an awful sight  
 To see a soul just set adrift  
 On that drear voyage from whose night  
 The ominous shadows never lift;  
 But 't is more awful to behold  
 A helpless infant newly born,  
 Whose little hands unconscious hold  
 The keys of darkness and of morn.

Mine held them once; I flung away  
 Those keys that might have open set  
 The golden sluices of the day,  
 But clutch the keys of darkness yet;  
 I hear the reapers singing go  
 Into God's harvest; I, that might  
 With them have chosen, here below  
 Grope shuddering at the gates of night.

O glorious Youth, that once wast mine!  
 O high Ideal! all in vain  
 Ye enter at this ruined shrine  
 Whence worship ne'er shall rise again;  
 The bat and owl inhabit here,  
 The snake nests in the altar-stone,  
 The sacred vessels moulder near,  
 The image of the God is gone.

### THE OAK

WHAT gnarl'd stretch, what depth of  
 shade, is his!

There needs no crown to mark the for-  
 est's king;  
 How in his leaves outshines full summer's  
 bliss!

Sun, storm, rain, dew, to him their trib-  
 ute bring,  
 Which he with such benignant royalty  
 Accepts, as overpayeth what is lent;  
 All nature seems his vassal proud to be,  
 And cunning only for his ornament.

How towers he, too, amid the billowed  
 snows,

An unquelled exile from the summer's  
 throne,

Whose plain, uncinctured front more kingly  
 shows,

Now that the obscuring courtier leaves  
 are flown.

His boughs make music of the winter air,  
 Jewelled with sleet, like some cathedral  
 front

Where clinging snow-flakes with quaint art  
 repair

The dints and furrows of time's envious  
 brunt.

How doth his patient strength the rude  
 March wind

Persuade to seem glad breaths of sum-  
 mer breeze,

And win the soil that fain would be unkind,

To swell his revenues with proud increase !  
 He is the gem; and all the landscape wide  
 (So doth his grandeur isolate the sense)  
 Seems but the setting, worthless all beside,  
 An empty socket, were he fallen thence.

So, from oft converse with life's wintry  
 gales,  
 Should man learn how to clasp with  
 tougher roots  
 The inspiring earth; how otherwise avails  
 The leaf - creating sap that sunward  
 shoots ?  
 So every year that falls with noiseless  
 flake  
 Should fill old scars up on the storm-  
 ward side,  
 And make hoar age revered for age's sake,  
 Not for traditions of youth's leafy pride.

So, from the pinched soil of a churlish fate,  
 True hearts compel the sap of sturdier  
 growth,  
 So between earth and heaven stand simply  
 great,  
 That these shall seem but their attend-  
 ants both;  
 For nature's forces with obedient zeal  
 Wait on the rooted faith and oaken will;  
 As quickly the pretender's cheat they feel,  
 And turn mad Pucks to flout and mock  
 him still.

Lord ! all thy works are lessons; each con-  
 tains  
 Some emblem of man's all-containing  
 soul;  
 Shall he make fruitless all thy glorious  
 pains,  
 Delving within thy grace an eyeless  
 mole ?  
 Make me the least of thy Dodona-grove,  
 Cause me some message of thy truth to  
 bring,  
 Speak but a word through me, nor let thy  
 love  
 Among my boughs disdain to perch and  
 sing.

AMBROSE

NEVER, surely, was holier man  
 Than Ambrose, since the world began;

With diet spare and raiment thin  
 He shielded himself from the father of sin;  
 With bed of iron and scourgings oft,  
 His heart to God's hand as wax made soft.

Through earnest prayer and watchings  
 long  
 He sought to know 'tween right and wrong,  
 Much wrestling with the blessed Word  
 To make it yield the sense of the Lord,  
 That he might build a storm-proof creed  
 To fold the flock in at their need.

At last he builded a perfect faith,  
 Fenced round about with *The Lord thus*  
*said;*

To himself he fitted the doorway's size,  
 Meted the light to the need of his eyes,  
 And knew, by a sure and inward sign,  
 That the work of his fingers was divine.

Then Ambrose said, " All those shall die  
 The eternal death who believe not as I;"  
 And some were boiled, some burned in fire,  
 Some sawn in twain, that his heart's desire,  
 For the good of men's souls might be satis-  
 fied

By the drawing of all to the righteous side.

One day, as Ambrose was seeking the truth  
 In his lonely walk, he saw a youth  
 Resting himself in the shade of a tree;  
 It had never been granted him to see  
 So shining a face, and the good man  
 thought

'T were pity he should not believe as he  
 ought.

So he set himself by the young man's side,  
 And the state of his soul with questions  
 tried;

But the heart of the stranger was hardened  
 indeed,

Nor received the stamp of the one true  
 creed;

And the spirit of Ambrose waxed sore to  
 find

Such features the porch of so narrow a  
 mind.

" As each beholds in cloud and fire  
 The shape that answers his own desire,  
 So each," said the youth, " in the Law shall  
 find

The figure and fashion of his mind;

And to each in his mercy bath God allowed  
His several pillar of fire and cloud."

The soul of Ambrose burned with zeal  
And holy wrath for the young man's weal:  
"Believest thou then, most wretched  
youth,"

Cried he, "a dividual essence in Truth?  
I fear me thy heart is too cramped with sin  
To take the Lord in his glory in."

Now there bubbled beside them where they  
stood

A fountain of waters sweet and good;  
The youth to the streamlet's brink drew  
near

Saying, "Ambrose, thou maker of creeds,  
look here!"

Six vases of crystal then he took,  
And set them along the edge of the brook.

"As into these vessels the water I pour,  
There shall one hold less, another more,  
And the water unchanged, in every case,  
Shall put on the figure of the vase;

O thou, who wouldst unity make through  
strife,

Canst thou fit this sign to the Water of  
Life?"

When Ambrose looked up, he stood alone,  
The youth and the stream and the vases  
were gone;

But he knew, by a sense of humbled grace,  
He had talked with an angel face to face,  
And felt his heart change inwardly,  
As he fell on his knees beneath the tree.

## ABOVE AND BELOW

### I

O DWELLERS in the valley-land,  
Who in deep twilight grope and cower,  
Till the slow mountain's dial-hand  
Shorten to noon's triumphal hour,  
While ye sit idle, do ye think  
The Lord's great work sits idle too?  
That light dare not o'erleap the brink  
Of morn, because 't is dark with you?

Though yet your valleys skulk in night,  
In God's ripe fields the day is cried,  
And reapers, with their sickles bright,  
Troop, singing, down the mountain-side:

Come up, and feel what health there is  
In the frank Dawn's delighted eyes,  
As, bending with a pitying kiss,  
The night-shed tears of Earth she dries!

The Lord wants reapers: oh, mount up,  
Before night comes, and says, "Too  
late!"

Stay not for taking scrip or cup,  
The Master hungers while ye wait;  
'T is from these heights alone your eyes  
The advancing spears of day can see,  
That o'er the eastern hill-tops rise,  
To break your long captivity.

### II

Lone watcher on the mountain-height,  
It is right precious to behold  
The first long surf of climbing light  
Flood all the thirsty east with gold;  
But we, who in the shadow sit,  
Know also when the day is nigh,  
Seeing thy shining forehead lit  
With his inspiring prophecy.

Thou hast thine office; we have ours;  
God lacks not early service here,  
But what are thine eleventh hours  
He counts with us for morning cheer;  
Our day, for Him, is long enough,  
And when He giveth work to do,  
The bruised reed is amply tough  
To pierce the shield of error through.

But not the less do thou aspire  
Light's earlier messages to preach;  
Keep back no syllable of fire,  
Plunge deep the rowels of thy speech.  
Yet God deems not thine acried sight  
More worthy than our twilight dim;  
For meek Obedience, too, is Light,  
And following that is finding Him.

## THE CAPTIVE

It was past the hour of trysting,  
But she lingered for him still;  
Like a child, the eager streamlet  
Leaped and laughed adown the hill,  
Happy to be free at twilight  
From its toiling at the mill.

Then the great moon on a sudden  
Ominous, and red as blood,



Startling as a new creation,  
O'er the eastern hilltop stood,  
Casting deep and deeper shadows  
Through the mystery of the wood.

Dread closed vast and vague about her,  
And her thoughts turned fearfully  
To her heart, if there some shelter  
From the silence there might be,  
Like bare cedars leaning inland  
From the blighting of the sea.

Yet he came not, and the stillness  
Dampened round her like a tomb;  
She could feel cold eyes of spirits  
Looking on her through the gloom,  
She could hear the groping footsteps  
Of some blind, gigantic doom.

Suddenly the silence wavered  
Like a light mist in the wind,  
For a voice broke gently through it,  
Felt like sunshine by the blind,  
And the dread, like mist in sunshine,  
Furled serenely from her mind.

"Once my love, my love forever,  
Flesh or spirit, still the same,  
If I failed at time of trysting,  
Deem thou not my faith to blame;  
I, alas, was made a captive,  
As from Holy Land I came.

"On a green spot in the desert,  
Gleaming like an emerald star,  
Where a palm-tree, in lone silence,  
Yearning for its mate afar,  
Droops above a silver runnel,  
Slender as a scimitar,

"There thou 'lt find the humble postern  
To the castle of my foe;  
If thy love burn clear and faithful,  
Strike the gateway, green and low,  
Ask to enter, and the warder  
Surely will not say thee no."

Slept again the aspen silence,  
But her loneliness was o'er;  
Round her soul a motherly patience  
Clasped its arms forevermore;  
From her heart ebbed back the sorrow,  
Leaving smooth the golden shore.

Donned she now the pilgrim scallop,  
Took the Pilgrim staff in hand;

Like a cloud-shade fitting eastward,  
Wandered she o'er sea and land;  
And her footsteps in the desert  
Fell like cool rain on the sand.

Soon, beneath the palm-tree's shadow,  
Knelt she at the postern low;  
And thereat she knocked full gently,  
Fearing much the warder's no;  
All her heart stood still and listened,  
As the door swung backward slow.

There she saw no surly warder  
With an eye like bolt and bar;  
Through her soul a sense of music  
Throbbed, and, like a guardian Lar,  
On the threshold stood an angel,  
Bright and silent as a star.

Fairest seemed he of God's seraphs,  
And her spirit, lily-wise,  
Opened when he turned upon her  
The deep welcome of his eyes,  
Sending upward to that sunlight  
All its dew for sacrifice.

Then she heard a voice come onward  
Singing with a rapture new,  
As Eve heard the songs in Eden,  
Dropping earthward with the dew;  
Well she knew the happy singer,  
Well the happy song she knew.

Forward leaped she o'er the threshold,  
Eager as a glancing surf;  
Fell from her the spirit's languor,  
Fell from her the body's scurf;  
'Neath the palm next day some Arabs  
Found a corpse upon the turf.

## THE BIRCH-TREE

RIPPLING through thy branches goes the  
sunshine,  
Among thy leaves that palpitate forever;  
Ovid in thee a pining Nymph had prisoned,  
The soul once of some tremulous inland  
river,  
Quivering to tell her woe, but, ah! dumb,  
dumb forever!

While all the forest, witched with slumberous  
moonshine,

Holds up its leaves in happy, happy still-  
ness,  
Waiting the dew, with breath and pulse  
suspended,

I hear afar thy whispering, gleamy islands,  
And track thee wakeful still amid the  
wide-hung silence.

On the brink of some wood-nestled lakelet,  
Thy foliage, like the tresses of a Dryad,  
Dripping round thy slim white stem, whose  
shadow

Slopes quivering down the water's dusky  
quiet,

Thou shrink'st as on her bath's edge would  
some startled Naiad.

Thou art the go-between of rustic lovers;  
Thy white bark has their secrets in its  
keeping;

Reuben writes here the happy name of Pa-  
tience,

And thy lithe boughs hang murmuring and  
weeping

Above her, as she steals the mystery from  
thy keeping.

Thou art to me like my belovéd maiden,  
So frankly coy, so full of trembly confi-  
dences;

Thy shadow scarce seems shade, thy pat-  
tering leaflets

Sprinkle their gathered sunshine o'er my  
senses,

And Nature gives me all her summer con-  
fidences.

Whether my heart with hope or sorrow  
tremble,

Thou sympathizest still; wild and unquiet,  
I fling me down; thy ripple, like a river,  
Flows valleyward, where calmness is, and  
by it

My heart is floated down into the land of  
quiet.

#### AN INTERVIEW WITH MILES STANDISH

I SAT one evening in my room,

In that sweet hour of twilight  
When blended thoughts, half light, half  
gloom,

Throng through the spirit's skylight;  
The flames by fits curled round the bars,

Or up the chimney crinkled,  
While embers dropped like falling stars,  
And in the ashes tinkled.

I sat and mused; the fire burned low,  
And, o'er my senses stealing,

Crept something of the ruddy glow  
That bloomed on wall and ceiling;

My pictures (they are very few,  
The heads of ancient wise men)

Smoothed down their knotted fronts, and  
grew

As rosy as excisemen.

My antique high-backed Spanish chair  
Felt thrills through wood and leather,

That had been strangers since whilere,  
Mid Andalusian heather,

The oak that built its sturdy frame  
His happy arms stretched over

The ox whose fortunate hide became  
The bottom's polished cover.

It came out in that famous bark,  
That brought our sires intrepid,

Capacious as another ark  
For furniture decrepit;

For, as that saved of bird and beast  
A pair for propagation,

So has the seed of these increased  
And furnished half the nation.

Kings sit, they say, in slippery seats;  
But those slant precipices

Of ice the northern voyager meets  
Less slippery are than this is;

To cling therein would pass the wit  
Of royal man or woman,

And whatsoever can stay in it  
Is more or less than human.

I offer to all bores this perch,  
Dear well-intentioned people

With heads as void as week-day church,  
Tongues longer than the steeple;

To folks with missions, whose gaunt eyes  
See golden ages rising, —

Salt of the earth! in what queer Guys  
Thou 'rt fond of crystallizing!

My wonder, then, was not unmixed  
With merciful suggestion,

When, as my roving eyes grew fixed  
Upon the chair in question,

I saw its trembling arms enclose

A figure grim and rusty,  
Whose doublet plain and plainer hose  
Were something worn and dusty.

Now even such men as Nature forms  
Merely to fill the street with,  
Once turned to ghosts by hungry worms,  
Are serious things to meet with;  
Your penitent spirits are no jokes,  
And, though I'm not averse to  
A quiet shade, even they are folks  
One cares not to speak first to.

Who knows, thought I, but he has come,  
By Charon kindly ferried,  
To tell me of a mighty sum  
Behind my wainscot buried ?  
There is a buccaneerish air  
About that garb outlandish —  
Just then the ghost drew up his chair  
And said, "My name is Standish.

"I come from Plymouth, deadily bored  
With toasts, and songs, and speeches,  
As long and flat as my old sword,  
As threadbare as my breeches:  
*They* understand us Pilgrims ! *they*,  
Smooth men with rosy faces,  
Strength's knots and gnarls all pared away,  
And varnish in their places !

"We had some toughness in our grain,  
The eye to rightly see us is  
Not just the one that lights the brain  
Of drawing-room Tyrtæuses:  
*They* talk about their Pilgrim blood,  
Their birthright high and holy !  
A mountain-stream that ends in mud  
Methinks is melancholy.

"He had stiff knees, the Puritan,  
That were not good at bending;  
The homespun dignity of man  
He thought was worth defending;  
He did not, with his pinchbeck ore,  
His country's shame forgotten,  
Gild Freedom's coffin o'er and o'er,  
When all within was rotten.

"These loud ancestral boasts of yours,  
How can they else than vex us ?  
Where were your dinner orators  
When slavery grasped at Texas ?  
Dumb on his knees was every one  
That now is bold as Cæsar;

Mere pegs to hang an office on  
Such stalwart men as these are."

"Good sir," I said, "you seem much  
stirred;  
The sacred compromises" —  
"Now God confound the dastard word !  
My gall thereat arises:  
Northward it hath this sense alone,  
That you, your conscience blinding,  
Shall bow your fool's nose to the stone,  
When slavery feels like grinding.

"'T is shame to see such painted sticks  
In Vane's and Winthrop's places,  
To see your spirit of Seventy-six  
Drag humbly in the traces,  
With slavery's lash upon her back,  
And herds of office-holders  
To shout applause, as, with a crack,  
It peels her patient shoulders.

"We forefathers to such a rout ! —  
No, by my faith in God's word !"  
Half rose the ghost, and half drew out  
The ghost of his old broadsword,  
Then thrust it slowly back again,  
And said, with reverent gesture,  
"No, Freedom, no! blood should not stain  
The hem of thy white vesture.

"I feel the soul in me draw near  
The mount of prophesying;  
In this bleak wilderness I hear  
A John the Baptist crying;  
Far in the east I see upleap  
The streaks of first forewarning,  
And they who sowed the light shall reap  
The golden sheaves of morning.

"Child of our travail and our woe,  
Light in our day of sorrow,  
Through my rapt spirit I foreknow  
The glory of thy morrow;  
I hear great steps, that through the shade  
Draw nigher still and nigher,  
And voices call like that which bade  
The prophet come up higher."

I looked, no form mine eyes could find,  
I heard the red cock crowing,  
And through my window-chinks the wind  
A dismal tune was blowing;  
Thought I, My neighbor Buckingham  
Hath somewhat in him gritty,

Some Pilgrim-stuff that hates all sham,  
And he will print my ditty.

### ON THE CAPTURE OF FUGITIVE SLAVES NEAR WASHINGTON

In a letter to Edward M. Davis written from Elmwood July 24, 1845, Lowell says: "I blew another 'dolorous and jarring blast' in the *Courier* the other day, which you will probably see in the *Liberator* of this week or next. I was impelled to write by the account of the poor fugitives who were taken near Washington. I think it has done some good. At any rate, it has set two gentlemen together by the ears about Dissolution, and they are hammering away at each other in the *Courier*." The blast was the following stanzas.

LOOK on who will in apathy, and stifle they  
who can,  
The sympathies, the hopes, the words, that  
make man truly man;  
Let those whose hearts are dungeoned up  
with interest or with ease  
Consent to hear with quiet pulse of loath-  
some deeds like these!

I first drew in New England's air, and  
from her hardy breast  
Sucked in the tyrant-hating milk that will  
not let me rest;  
And if my words seem treason to the dul-  
lard and the tame,  
'T is but my Bay-State dialect, — our  
fathers spake the same!

Shame on the costly mockery of piling  
stone on stone  
To those who won our liberty, the heroes  
dead and gone,  
While we look coldly on and see law-  
shielded ruffians slay  
The men who fain would win their own,  
the heroes of to-day!

Are we pledged to craven silence? Oh,  
fling it to the wind,  
The parchment wall that bars us from the  
least of human kind,  
That makes us cringe and temporize, and  
dumbly stand at rest,  
While Pity's burning flood of words is red-  
hot in the breast!

Though we break our fathers' promise, we  
have nobler duties first;  
The traitor to Humanity is the traitor most  
accursed;  
Man is more than Constitutions; better rot  
beneath the sod,  
Than be true to Church and State while we  
are doubly false to God!

We owe allegiance to the State; but deeper,  
truer, more,  
To the sympathies that God hath set within  
our spirit's core;  
Our country claims our fealty; we grant it  
so, but then  
Before Man made us citizens, great Nature  
made us men.

He's true to God who's true to man;  
wherever wrong is done,  
To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath  
the all-beholding sun,  
That wrong is also done to us; and they  
are slaves most base,  
Whose love of right is for themselves, and  
not for all their race.

God works for all. Ye cannot hem the  
hope of being free  
With parallels of latitude, with mountain-  
range or sea.  
Put golden padlocks on Truth's lips, be  
callous as ye will,  
From soul to soul, o'er all the world, leaps  
one electric thrill.

Chain down your slaves with ignorance, ye  
cannot keep apart,  
With all your craft of tyranny, the human  
heart from heart:  
When first the Pilgrims landed on the Bay  
State's iron shore,  
The word went forth that slavery should  
one day be no more.

Out from the land of bondage 't is decreed  
our slaves shall go,  
And signs to us are offered, as erst to Pha-  
raoh;  
If we are blind, their exodus, like Israel's  
of yore,  
Through a Red Sea is doomed to be, whose  
surges are of gore.



'T is ours to save our brethren, with peace  
and love to win  
Their darkened hearts from error, ere they  
harden it to sin;  
But if before his duty man with listless  
spirit stands,  
Erelong the Great Avenger takes the work  
from out his hands.

## TO THE DANDELION

DEAR common flower, that grow'st be-  
side the way,  
Fringing the dusty road with harmless  
gold,

First pledge of blithesome May,  
Which children pluck, and, full of pride  
uphold,

High-hearted buccaneers, o'erjoyed that  
they

An Eldorado in the grass have found,  
Which not the rich earth's ample  
round

May match in wealth, thou art more dear  
to me

Than all the prouder summer-blooms  
may be.

Gold such as thine ne'er drew the Span-  
ish prow

Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,  
Nor wrinkled the lean brow

Of age, to rob the lover's heart of ease;  
'T is the Spring's largess, which she scat-  
ters now

To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,  
Though most hearts never understand  
To take it at God's value, but pass by  
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.

Thou art my tropics and mine Italy;  
To look at thee unlocks a warmer clime;  
The eyes thou givest me  
Are in the heart, and heed not space or  
time:

Not in mid June the golden-cuirassed  
bee  
Feels a more summer-like warm ravish-  
ment

In the white lily's breezy tent,  
His fragrant Sybaris, than I, when first  
From the dark green thy yellow circles  
burst.

Then think I of deep shadows on the  
grass,  
Of meadows where in sun the cattle graze,  
Where, as the breezes pass,  
The gleaming rushes lean a thousand ways,  
Of leaves that slumber in a cloudy mass,  
Or whiten in the wind, of waters blue  
That from the distance sparkle through  
Some woodland gap, and of a sky above,  
Where one white cloud like a stray lamb  
doth move.

My childhood's earliest thoughts are  
linked with thee;  
The sight of thee calls back the robin's  
song,

Who, from the dark old tree  
Beside the door, sang clearly all day long,  
And I, secure in childish piety,  
Listened as if I heard an angel sing

With news from heaven, which he  
could bring

Fresh every day to my untainted ears  
When birds and flowers and I were  
happy peers.

How like a prodigal doth nature seem,  
When thou, for all thy gold, so common art!  
Thou teachest me to deem

More sacredly of every human heart,  
Since each reflects in joy its scanty gleam  
Of heaven, and could some wondrous secret  
show,

Did we but pay the love we owe,  
And with a child's undoubting wisdom  
look

On all these living pages of God's book.

## THE GHOST-SEER

This poem was printed March 8, 1845, in the  
*Broadway Journal*, edited by C. F. Briggs.  
In a letter accompanying the poem Lowell  
confesses his dissatisfaction with the execution  
as compared with the conception, and adds:  
"Written in the metre which I have chosen it  
is perhaps too long, but the plot would have  
sufficed for quite a long and elaborate poem,  
into which a good deal of reflection and ex-  
perience might have been compressed."

YE who, passing graves by night,  
Glance not to the left or right,  
Lest a spirit should arise,  
Cold and white, to freeze your eyes,

Some weak phantom, which your doubt  
 Shapes upon the dark without  
 From the dark within, a guess  
 At the spirit's deathlessness,  
 Which ye entertain with fear  
 In your self-built dungeon here,  
 Where ye sell your God-given lives  
 Just for gold to buy you gyves, —  
 Ye without a shudder meet  
 In the city's noonday street,  
 Spirits sadder and more dread  
 Than from out the clay have fled,  
 Buried, beyond hope of light,  
 In the body's haunted night !  
 See ye not that woman pale ?  
 There are bloodhounds on her trail !  
 Bloodhounds two, all gaunt and lean,  
 (For the soul their scent is keen,)  
 Want and Sin, and Sin is last,  
 They have followed far and fast;  
 Want gave tongue, and, at her howl,  
 Sin awakened with a growl.  
 Ah, poor girl ! she had a right  
 To a blessing from the light;  
 Title-deeds to sky and earth  
 God gave to her at her birth;  
 But, before they were enjoyed,  
 Poverty had made them void,  
 And had drunk the sunshine up  
 From all nature's ample cup,  
 Leaving her a first-born's share  
 In the dregs of darkness there.  
 Often, on the sidewalk bleak,  
 Hungry, all alone, and weak,  
 She has seen, in night and storm,  
 Rooms o'erflow with firelight warm,  
 Which, outside the window-glass,  
 Doubled all the cold, alas !  
 Till each ray that on her fell  
 Stabbed her like an icicle,  
 And she almost loved the wail  
 Of the bloodhounds on her trail.  
 Till the floor becomes her bier,  
 She shall feel their pantings near,  
 Close upon her very heels,  
 Spite of all the din of wheels;  
 Shivering on her pallet poor,  
 She shall hear them at the door  
 Whine and scratch to be let in,  
 Sister bloodhounds, Want and Sin !

Hark ! that rustle of a dress,  
 Stiff with lavish costliness !  
 Here comes one whose cheek would flush  
 But to have her garment brush

'Gainst the girl whose fingers thin  
 Wove the weary broidery in,  
 Bending backward from her toil,  
 Lest her tears the silk might soil,  
 And, in midnights chill and murk,  
 Stitched her life into the work,  
 Shaping from her bitter thought  
 Heart's-ease and forget-me-not,  
 Satirizing her despair  
 With the emblems woven there.  
 Little doth the wearer heed  
 Of the heart-break in the brede;  
 A hyena by her side  
 Skulks, down-looking, — it is Pride.  
 He digs for her in the earth,  
 Where lie all her claims of birth,  
 With his foul paws rooting o'er  
 Some long-buried ancestor,  
 Who perhaps a statue won  
 By the ill deeds he had done,  
 By the innocent blood he shed,  
 By the desolation spread  
 Over happy villages,  
 Blotting out the smile of peace.  
 There walks Judas, he who sold  
 Yesterday his Lord for gold,  
 Sold God's presence in his heart  
 For a proud step in the mart;  
 He hath dealt in flesh and blood;  
 At the bank his name is good;  
 At the bank, and only there,  
 'T is a marketable ware.  
 In his eyes that stealthy gleam  
 Was not learned of sky or stream,  
 But it has the cold, hard glint  
 Of new dollars from the mint.  
 Open now your spirit's eyes,  
 Look through that poor clay disguise  
 Which has thickened, day by day,  
 Till it keeps all light at bay,  
 And his soul in pitchy gloom  
 Gropes about its narrow tomb,  
 From whose dank and slimy walls  
 Drop by drop the horror falls.  
 Look ! a serpent lank and cold  
 Hugs his spirit fold on fold;  
 From his heart, all day and night,  
 It doth suck God's blessed light.  
 Drink it will, and drink it must,  
 Till the cup holds naught but dust;  
 All day long he hears it hiss,  
 Writhing in its fiendish bliss;  
 All night long he sees its eyes  
 Flicker with foul ecstasies,  
 As the spirit ebbs away

Into the absorbing clay.  
 Who is he that skulks, afraid  
 Of the trust he has betrayed,  
 Shuddering if perchance a gleam  
 Of old nobleness should stream  
 Through the pent, unwholesome room,  
 Where his shrunk soul cowers in gloom,  
 Spirit sad beyond the rest  
 By more instinct for the best ?  
 'T is a poet who was sent  
 For a bad world's punishment,  
 By compelling it to see  
 Golden glimpses of To Be,  
 By compelling it to hear  
 Songs that prove the angels near;  
 Who was sent to be the tongue  
 Of the weak and spirit-wrung,  
 Whence the fiery-winged Despair  
 In men's shrinking eyes might flare.  
 'T is our hope doth fashion us  
 To base use or glorious:  
 He who might have been a lark  
 Of Truth's morning, from the dark  
 Raining down melodious hope  
 Of a freer, broader scope,  
 Aspirations, prophecies,  
 Of the spirit's full sunrise,  
 Chose to be a bird of night,  
 That, with eyes refusing light,  
 Hooted from some hollow tree  
 Of the world's idolatry.  
 'T is his punishment to hear  
 Sweep of eager pinions near,  
 And his own vain wings to feel  
 Drooping downward to his heel,  
 All their grace and import lost,  
 Burdening his weary ghost:  
 Ever walking by his side  
 He must see his angel guide,  
 Who at intervals doth turn  
 Looks on him so sadly stern,  
 With such ever-new surprise  
 Of hushed anguish in her eyes,  
 That it seems the light of day  
 From around him shrinks away,  
 Or drops blunted from the wall  
 Built around him by his fall.  
 Then the mountains, whose white peaks  
 Catch the morning's earliest streaks,  
 He must see, where prophets sit,  
 Turning east their faces lit,  
 Whence, with footsteps beautiful,  
 To the earth, yet dim and dull,  
 They the gladsome tidings bring  
 Of the sunlight's hastening:

Never can these hills of bliss  
 Be o'erclimbed by feet like his !

But enough ! Oh, do not dare  
 From the next the veil to tear,  
 Woven of station, trade, or dress,  
 More obscene than nakedness,  
 Wherewith plausible culture drapes  
 Fallen Nature's myriad shapes !  
 Let us rather love to mark  
 How the unextinguished spark  
 Still gleams through the thin disguise  
 Of our customs, pomps, and lies,  
 And, not seldom blown to flame,  
 Vindicates its ancient claim.

## STUDIES FOR TWO HEADS

The second of these studies was from A. Bronson Alcott. See *Letters* II. 349, where Lowell has something to say of the ease with which he wrote at the time of this poem, *i. e.* before 1850. He was under an engagement at this time to write constantly for the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, and he threw off many poems as part of the fulfilment of his engagement. The spur to activity came when his own mind was fertile, and some of his best known and most spontaneous work appeared at this time.

## I

SOME sort of heart I know is hers, —  
 I chanced to feel her pulse one night;  
 A brain she has that never errs,  
 And yet is never nobly right;  
 It does not leap to great results,  
 But, in some corner out of sight,  
 Suspects a spot of latent blight,  
 And, o'er the impatient infinite,  
 She bargains, haggles, and consults.

Her eye, — it seems a chemic test  
 And drops upon you like an acid;  
 It bites you with unconscious zest,  
 So clear and bright, so coldly placid;  
 It holds you quietly aloof,  
 It holds, — and yet it does not win you;  
 It merely puts you to the proof  
 And sorts what qualities are in you;  
 It smiles, but never brings you nearer,  
 It lights, — her nature draws not nigh;  
 'T is but that yours is growing clearer  
 To her assays; — yes, try and try,  
 You'll get no deeper than her eye.

There, you are classified: she's gone  
 Far, far away into herself;  
 Each with its Latin label on,  
 Your poor components, one by one,  
 Are laid upon their proper shelf  
 In her compact and ordered mind,  
 And what of you is left behind  
 Is no more to her than the wind;  
 In that clear brain, which, day and night,  
 No movement of the heart e'er jostles,  
 Her friends are ranged on left and right, —  
 Here, silex, hornblende, sienite;  
 There, animal remains and fossils.

And yet, O subtle analyst,  
 That canst each property detect  
 Of mood or grain, that canst untwist  
 Each tangled skein of intellect,  
 And with thy scalpel eyes lay bare  
 Each mental nerve more fine than air, —  
 O brain exact, that in thy scales  
 Canst weigh the sun and never err,  
 For once thy patient science fails,  
 One problem still defies thy art; —  
 Thou never canst compute for her  
 The distance and diameter  
 Of any simple human heart.

## II

Hear him but speak, and you will feel  
 The shadows of the Portico  
 Over your tranquil spirit steal,  
 To modulate all joy and woe  
 To one subdued, subduing glow;  
 Above our squabbling business-hours,  
 Like Phidian Jove's, his beauty lowers,  
 His nature satirizes ours;  
 A form and front of Attic grace,  
 He shames the higgling market-place,  
 And dwarfs our more mechanic powers.

What throbbing verse can fitly render  
 That face so pure, so trembling-tender?  
 Sensation glimmers through its rest,  
 It speaks unmanacled by words,  
 As full of motion as a nest  
 That palpitates with unfledged birds;  
 'T is likest to Bethesda's stream,  
 Forewarned through all its thrilling springs,  
 White with the angel's coming gleam,  
 And rippled with his fanning wings.

Hear him unfold his plots and plans,  
 And larger destinies seem man's;  
 You conjure from his glowing face

The omen of a fairer race;  
 With one grand trope he boldly spans  
 The gulf wherein so many fall,  
 'Twixt possible and actual;  
 His first swift word, talaria-shod,  
 Exuberant with conscious God,  
 Out of the choir of planets blots  
 The present earth with all its spots.

Himself unshaken as the sky,  
 His words, like whirlwinds, spin on high  
 Systems and creeds pellmell together;  
 'T is strange as to a deaf man's eye,  
 While trees uprooted splinter by,  
 The dumb turmoil of stormy weather;  
 Less of iconoclast than shaper,  
 His spirit, safe behind the reach  
 Of the tornado of his speech,  
 Burns calmly as a glowworm's taper.

So great in speech, but, ah! in act  
 So overrun with vermin troubles,  
 The coarse, sharp-cornered, ugly fact  
 Of life collapses all his bubbles:  
 Had he but lived in Plato's day,  
 He might, unless my fancy errs,  
 Have shared that golden voice's sway  
 O'er barefooted philosophers.  
 Our nipping climate hardly suits  
 The ripening of ideal fruits:  
 His theories vanquish us all summer,  
 But winter makes him dumb and dumber;  
 To see him mid life's needful things  
 Is something painfully bewildering;  
 He seems an angel with clipt wings  
 Tied to a mortal wife and children,  
 And by a brother seraph taken  
 In the act of eating eggs and bacon.  
 Like a clear fountain, his desire  
 Exults and leaps toward the light,  
 In every drop it says "Aspire!"  
 Striving for more ideal height;  
 And as the fountain, falling thence,  
 Crawls baffled through the common gutter,  
 So, from his speech's eminence,  
 He shrinks into the present tense,  
 Unkinged by foolish bread and butter.

Yet smile not, worldling, for in deeds  
 Not all of life that's brave and wise is;  
 He strews an ampler future's seeds,  
 'T is your fault if no harvest rises;  
 Smooth back the sneer; for is it naught  
 That all he is and has is Beauty's?



By soul the soul's gains must be wrought,  
The Actual claims our coarser thought,  
The Ideal hath its higher duties.

### ON A PORTRAIT OF DANTE BY GIOTTO

CAN this be thou who, lean and pale,  
With such immitigable eye  
Didst look upon those writhing souls in  
bale,

And note each vengeance, and pass by  
Unmoved, save when thy heart by chance  
Cast backward one forbidden glance,  
And saw Francesca, with child's glee,  
Subdue and mount thy wild-horse knee  
And with proud hands control its fiery  
prance ?

With half-drooped lids, and smooth, round  
brow,

And eye remote, that inly sees  
Fair Beatrice's spirit wandering now  
In some sea-lulled Hesperides,  
Thou movest through the jarring street,  
Secluded from the noise of feet

By her gift-blossom in thy hand,  
Thy branch of palm from Holy Land; —  
No trace is here of ruin's fiery sleet.

Yet there is something round thy lips  
That prophesies the coming doom,  
The soft, gray herald-shadow ere the  
eclipse

Notches the perfect disk with gloom;  
A something that would banish thee,  
And thine untamed pursuer be,  
From men and their unworthy fates,  
Though Florence had not shut her gates,  
And Grief had loosed her clutch and let  
thee free.

Ah ! he who follows fearlessly  
The beckonings of a poet-heart  
Shall wander, and without the world's de-  
cree,

A banished man in field and mart;  
Harder than Florence' walls the bar  
Which with deaf sternness holds him far  
From home and friends, till death's re-  
lease,

And makes his only prayer for peace,  
Like thine, scarred veteran of a lifelong  
war !

### ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND'S CHILD

This poem was printed in the *Democratic Review*, October, 1844, and the friend was doubtless C. F. Briggs. See the letter of consolation addressed to him in August, *Letters I.* 78-81.

DEATH never came so nigh to me before,  
Nor showed me his mild face: oft had I  
mused

Of calm and peace and safe forgetfulness,  
Of folded hands, closed eyes, and heart at  
rest,

And slumber sound beneath a flowery turf,  
Of faults forgotten, and an inner place  
Kept sacred for us in the heart of friends;  
But these were idle fancies, satisfied  
With the mere husk of this great mystery,  
And dwelling in the outward shows of  
things.

Heaven is not mounted to on wings of  
dreams,  
Nor doth the unthankful happiness of  
youth

Aim thitherward, but floats from bloom to  
bloom,

With earth's warm patch of sunshine well  
content:

'T is sorrow builds the shining ladder up,  
Whose golden rounds are our calamities,  
Whereon our firm feet planting, nearer  
God

The spirit climbs, and hath its eyes un-  
sealed.

True is it that Death's face seems stern  
and cold,

When he is sent to summon those we love,  
But all God's angels come to us disguised;  
Sorrow and sickness, poverty and death,  
One after other lift their frowning masks,  
And we behold the seraph's face beneath,  
All radiant with the glory and the calm  
Of having looked upon the front of God.  
With every anguish of our earthly part  
The spirit's sight grows clearer; this was  
meant

When Jesus touched the blind man's lids  
with clay.

Life is the jailer, Death the angel sent  
To draw the unwilling bolts and set us free.  
He flings not ope the ivory gate of Rest, —  
Only the fallen spirit knocks at that, —

But to benigner regions beckons us,  
To destinies of more rewarded toil.  
In the hushed chamber, sitting by the dead,  
It grates on us to hear the flood of life  
Whirl rustling onward, senseless of our  
loss.

The bee hums on; around the blossomed  
vine

Whirs the light humming-bird; the cricket  
chirps;

The locust's shrill alarum stings the ear;  
Hard by, the cock shouts lustily; from  
farm to farm,

His cheery brothers, telling of the sun,  
Answer, till far away the joyance dies:  
We never knew before how God had filled  
The summer air with happy living sounds;  
All round us seems an overplus of life,  
And yet the one dear heart lies cold and  
still.

It is most strange, when the great miracle  
Hath for our sakes been done, when we  
have had

Our inwardest experience of God,  
When with his presence still the room ex-  
pands,

And is awed after him, that naught is  
changed,

That Nature's face looks unacknowledging,  
And the mad world still dances heedless on  
After its butterflies, and gives no sign.

'T is hard at first to see it all aright:

In vain Faith blows her trump to summon  
back

Her scattered troop: yet, through the  
clouded glass

Of our own bitter tears, we learn to look  
Undazzled on the kindness of God's face;  
Earth is too dark, and Heaven alone shines  
through.

It is no little thing, when a fresh soul  
And a fresh heart, with their unmeasured  
scope

For good, not gravitating earthward yet,  
But circling in diviner periods,  
Are sent into the world, — no little thing,  
When this unbounded possibility  
Into the outer silence is withdrawn.

Ah, in this world, where every guiding  
thread

Ends suddenly in the one sure centre,  
death,

The visionary hand of Might-have-been  
Alone can fill Desire's cup to the brim!

How changed, dear friend, are thy part and  
thy child's!

He bends above *thy* cradle now, or holds  
His warning finger out to be thy guide;  
Thou art the nursling now; he watches  
thee

Slow learning, one by one, the secret things  
Which are to him used sights of every day;  
He smiles to see thy wondering glances  
con

The grass and pebbles of the spirit-world,  
To thee miraculous; and he will teach  
Thy knees their due observances of prayer.  
Children are God's apostles, day by day  
Sent forth to preach of love, and hope, and  
peace;

Nor hath thy babe his mission left undone.  
To me, at least, his going hence hath given  
Serener thoughts and nearer to the skies,  
And opened a new fountain in my heart  
For thee, my friend, and all: and oh, if  
Death

More near approaches meditates, and clasps  
Even now some dearer, more reluctant  
hand,

God, strengthen thou my faith, that I may  
see

That 't is thine angel, who, with loving  
haste,

Unto the service of the inner shrine,  
Doth waken thy beloved with a kiss.

### EURYDICE

HEAVEN's cup held down to me I drain,  
The sunshine mounts and spurs my brain;  
Bathing in grass, with thirsty eye  
I suck the last drop of the sky;  
With each hot sense I draw to the lees  
The quickening out-door influences,  
And empty to each radiant comer  
A supernaculum of summer:  
Not, Bacchus, all thy grosser juice  
Could bring enchantment so profuse,  
Though for its press each grape-bunch had  
The white feet of an Oread.

Through our coarse art gleam, now and  
then,

The features of angelic men:  
'Neath the lewd Satyr's veiling paint  
Glow forth the Sibyl, Muse, or Saint;  
The dauber's botch no more obscures  
The mighty master's portraitures.

And who can say what luckier beam  
The hidden glory shall redeem,  
For what chance clod the soul may wait  
To stumble on its nobler fate,  
Or why, to his unwarned abode,  
Still by surprises comes the God?  
Some moment, nailed on sorrow's cross,  
May meditate a whole youth's loss,  
Some windfall joy, we know not whence,  
Redeem a lifetime's rash expense,  
And, suddenly wise, the soul may mark,  
Stripped of their simulated dark,  
Mountains of gold that pierce the sky,  
Girdling its valleyed poverty.

I feel ye, childhood's hopes, return,  
With olden heats my pulses burn, —  
Mine be the self-forgetting sweep,  
The torrent impulse swift and wild,  
Wherewith Taghkanic's rockborn child  
Dares gloriously the dangerous leap,  
And, in his sky-descended mood,  
Transmutes each drop of sluggish blood,  
By touch of bravery's simple wand,  
To amethyst and diamond,  
Proving himself no bastard slip,  
But the true granite-cradled one,  
Nursed with the rock's primeval drip,  
The cloud-embracing mountain's son!

Prayer breathed in vain! no wish's sway  
Rebuilds the vanished yesterday;  
For plated wares of Sheffield stamp  
We gave the old Aladdin's lamp;  
'T is we are changed; ah, whither went  
That undesigned abandonment,  
That wise, unquestioning content,  
Which could erect its microcosm  
Out of a weed's neglected blossom,  
Could call up Arthur and his peers  
By a low moss's clump of spears,  
Or, in its shingle tireme launched,  
Where Charles in some green inlet  
branched,

Could venture for the golden fleece  
And dragon-watched Hesperides,  
Or, from its ripple-shattered fate,  
Ulysses' chances re-create?  
When, heralding life's every phase,  
There glowed a goddess-veiling haze,  
A plenteous, forewarning grace,  
Like that more tender dawn that flies  
Before the full moon's ample rise?  
Methinks thy parting glory shines  
Through yonder grove of singing pines;

At that elm-vista's end I trace  
Dimly thy sad leave-taking face,  
Eurydice! Eurydice!  
The tremulous leaves repeat to me  
Eurydice! Eurydice!  
No gloomier Orcus swallows thee  
Than the unclouded sunset's glow;  
Thine is at least Elysian woe;  
Thou hast Good's natural decay,  
And fadest like a star away  
Into an atmosphere whose shine  
With fuller day o'ermasters thine,  
Entering defeat as 't were a shrine;  
For us, — we turn life's diary o'er  
To find but one word, — Nevermore.

## SHE CAME AND WENT

As a twig trembles, which a bird  
Lights on to sing, then leaves unbent,  
So is my memory thrilled and stirred; —  
I only know she came and went.

As clasps some lake, by gusts unripen,  
The blue dome's measureless content,  
So my soul held that moment's heaven; —  
I only know she came and went.

As, at one bound, our swift spring heaps  
The orchards full of bloom and scent,  
So clove her May my wintry sleeps; —  
I only know she came and went.

An angel stood and met my gaze,  
Through the low doorway of my tent;  
The tent is struck, the vision stays; —  
I only know she came and went.

Oh, when the room grows slowly dim,  
And life's last oil is nearly spent,  
One gush of light these eyes will brim,  
Only to think she came and went.

## THE CHANGELING

I HAD a little daughter,  
And she was given to me  
To lead me gently backward  
To the Heavenly Father's knee,  
That I, by the force of nature,  
Might in some dim wise divine  
The depth of his infinite patience  
To this wayward soul of mine.

I know not how others saw her,  
 But to me she was wholly fair,  
 And the light of the heaven she came from  
 Still lingered and gleamed in her hair;  
 For it was as wavy and golden,  
 And as many changes took,  
 As the shadows of sun-gilt ripples  
 On the yellow bed of a brook.

To what can I liken her smiling  
 Upon me, her kneeling lover,  
 How it leaped from her lips to her eye-  
 lids,  
 And dimpled her wholly over,  
 Till her outstretched hands smiled also,  
 And I almost seemed to see  
 The very heart of her mother  
 Sending sun through her veins to me !

She had been with us scarce a twelve-  
 month,  
 And it hardly seemed a day,  
 When a troop of wandering angels  
 Stole my little daughter away;  
 Or perhaps those heavenly Zingari  
 But loosed the hampering strings,  
 And when they had opened her cage-door,  
 My little bird used her wings.

But they left in her stead a changeling,  
 A little angel child,  
 That seems like her bud in full blossom,  
 And smiles as she never smiled:  
 When I wake in the morning, I see it  
 Where she always used to lie,  
 And I feel as weak as a violet  
 Alone 'neath the awful sky.

As weak, yet as trustful also;  
 For the whole year long I see  
 All the wonders of faithful Nature  
 Still worked for the love of me;  
 Winds wander, and dews drip earthward,  
 Rain falls, suns rise and set,  
 Earth whirls, and all but to prosper  
 A poor little violet.

This child is not mine as the first was,  
 I cannot sing it to rest,  
 I cannot lift it up fatherly  
 And bliss it upon my breast:  
 Yet it lies in my little one's cradle  
 And sits in my little one's chair,  
 And the light of the heaven she's gone to  
 Transfigures its golden hair.

## THE PIONEER

WHAT man would live coffined with  
 brick and stone,  
 Imprisoned from the healing touch of  
 air,  
 And cramped with selfish landmarks  
 everywhere,  
 When all before him stretches, furrowless  
 and lone,  
 The unmapped prairie none can fence or  
 own ?

What man would read and read the self-  
 same faces,  
 And, like the marbles which the wind-  
 mill grinds,  
 Rub smooth forever with the same  
 smooth minds,  
 This year retracing last year's, every  
 year's, dull traces,  
 When there are woods and un-penfolded  
 spaces ?

What man o'er one old thought would  
 pore and pore,  
 Shut like a book between its covers  
 thin  
 For every fool to leave his dog's-ears  
 in,  
 When solitude is his, and God forevermore,  
 Just for the opening of a paltry door ?

What man would watch life's oozy  
 element  
 Creep Letheward forever, when he  
 might  
 Down some great river drift beyond  
 men's sight,  
 To where the undethroned forest's royal  
 tent  
 Broods with its hush o'er half a conti-  
 nent ?

What man with men would push and al-  
 tercate,  
 Piecing out crooked means to crooked  
 ends,  
 When he can have the skies and woods  
 for friends,  
 Snatch back the rudder of his undismantled  
 fate,  
 And in himself be ruler, church, and  
 state ?



Cast leaves and feathers rot in last year's  
nest,  
The winged brood, flown thence, new  
dwellings plan;  
The serf of his own Past is not a man;  
To change and change is life, to move and  
never rest; —  
Not what we are, but what we hope, is  
best.

The wild, free woods make no man halt  
or blind;  
Cities rob men of eyes and hands and  
feet,  
Patching one whole of many incom-  
plete;  
The general preys upon the individual  
mind,  
And each alone is helpless as the wind.

Each man is some man's servant; every  
soul  
Is by some other's presence quite dis-  
crowned;  
Each owes the next through all the  
imperfect round,  
Yet not with mutual help; each man is his  
own goal,  
And the whole earth must stop to pay  
him toll.

Here, life the undiminished man de-  
mands;  
New faculties stretch out to meet new  
wants;  
What Nature asks, that Nature also  
grants;  
Here man is lord, not drudge, of eyes and  
feet and hands,  
And to his life is knit with hourly  
bands.

Come out, then, from the old thoughts  
and old ways,  
Before you harden to a crystal cold  
Which the new life can shatter, but  
not mould;  
Freedom for you still waits, still, looking  
backward, stays,  
But widens still the irretrievable space.

## LONGING

Of all the myriad moods of mind  
That through the soul come thronging,

Which one was e'er so dear, so kind,  
So beautiful as Longing?  
The thing we long for, that we are  
For one transcendent moment,  
Before the Present poor and bare  
Can make its sneering comment.

Still, through our paltry stir and strife,  
Glows down the wished Ideal,  
And Longing moulds in clay what Life  
Carves in the marble Real;  
To let the new life in, we know,  
Desire must ope the portal;  
Perhaps the longing to be so  
Helps make the soul immortal.

Longing is God's fresh heavenward will  
With our poor earthward striving;  
We quench it that we may be still  
Content with merely living;  
But, would we learn that heart's full scope  
Which we are hourly wronging,  
Our lives must climb from hope to hope  
And realize our longing.

Ah! let us hope that to our praise  
Good God not only reckons  
The moments when we tread his ways,  
But when the spirit beckons, —  
That some slight good is also wrought  
Beyond self-satisfaction,  
When we are simply good in thought,  
Howe'er we fail in action.

## ODE TO FRANCE

FEBRUARY, 1848

## I

As, flake by flake, the beetling avalanches  
Build up their imminent crags of noise-  
less snow,  
Till some chance thrill the loosened ruin  
lanches  
In unwarned havoc on the roofs below,  
So grew and gathered through the silent  
years  
The madness of a People, wrong by  
wrong,  
There seemed no strength in the dumb  
toiler's tears,  
No strength in suffering; but the Past  
was strong:  
The brute despair of trampled centuries

Leaped up with one hoarse yell and  
snapped its bands,  
Groped for its right with horny, callous  
hands,  
And stared around for God with bloodshot  
eyes.

What wonder if those palms were all too  
hard  
For nice distinctions, — if that mænad  
throng —

They whose thick atmosphere no bard  
Had shivered with the lightning of his  
song,

Brutes with the memories and desires of  
men,

Whose chronicles were writ with iron  
pen,

In the crooked shoulder and the fore-  
head low,

Set wrong to balance wrong,  
And physicked woe with woe ?

## II

They did as they were taught; not theirs  
the blame,

If men who scattered firebrands reaped the  
flame:

They trampled Peace beneath their sav-  
age feet,

And by her golden tresses drew

Mercy along the pavement of the street.

O Freedom ! Freedom ! is thy morning-  
dew

So gory red ? Alas, thy light had  
ne'er

Shone in upon the chaos of their lair !

They reared to thee such symbol as they  
knew,

And worshipped it with flame and  
blood,

A Vengeance, axe in hand, that stood  
Holding a tyrant's head up by the clotted  
hair.

## III

What wrongs the Oppressor suffered, these  
we know;

These have found piteous voice in song  
and prose;

But for the Oppressed, their darkness and  
their woe,

Their grinding centuries, — what Muse  
had those ?

Though hall and palace had nor eyes nor  
ears,

Hardening a people's heart to senseless  
stone,

Thou knewest them, O Earth, that drank  
their tears,

O Heaven, that heard their inarticulate  
moan !

They noted down their fetters, link by  
link;

Coarse was the hand that scrawled, and  
red the ink;

Rude was their score, as suits unlettered  
men,

Notched with a headsman's axe upon a  
block:

What marvel if, when came the avenging  
shock,

'T was Atë, not Urania, held the pen ?

## IV

With eye averted, and an anguished frown,  
Loathingly glides the Muse through  
scenes of strife,

Where, like the heart of Vengeance up  
and down,

Throbs in its framework the blood-  
muffled knife;

Slow are the steps of Freedom, but her feet  
Turn never backward: hers no bloody  
glare;

Her light is calm, and innocent, and sweet,  
And where it enters there is no despair:

Not first on palace and cathedral spire  
Quivers and gleams that unconsuming fire;

While these stand black against her  
morning skies,

The peasant sees it leap from peak to peak  
Along his hills; the craftsman's burning  
eyes

Own with cool tears its influence mother-  
meek;

It lights the poet's heart up like a star;  
Ah ! while the tyrant deemed it still  
afar,

And twined with golden threads his futile  
snare,

That swift, convicting glow all round  
him ran;

'T was close beside him there,  
Sunrise whose Memnon is the soul of man.

## V

O Broker-King, is this thy wisdom's fruit ?  
A dynasty plucked out as 't were a weed

Grown rankly in a night, that leaves no  
seed !

Could eighteen years strike down no deeper  
root ?

But now thy vulture eye was turned on  
Spain;

A shout from Paris, and thy crown falls off,  
Thy race has ceased to reign,  
And thou become a fugitive and scoff:  
Slippery the feet that mount by stairs of  
gold,

And weakest of all fences one of steel;  
Go and keep school again like him of  
old,

The Syracusan tyrant;—thou mayst feel  
Royal amid a birch-swayed commonweal !

## VI

Not long can he be ruler who allows

His time to run before him; thou wast  
naught

Soon as the strip of gold about thy brows  
Was no more emblem of the People's  
thought:

Vain were thy bayonets against the foe  
Thou hadst to cope with; thou didst  
wage

War not with Frenchmen merely;—no,  
Thy strife was with the Spirit of the Age,  
The invisible Spirit whose first breath di-  
vine

Scattered thy frail endeavor,  
And, like poor last year's leaves, whirled  
thee and thine  
Into the Dark forever !

## VII

Is here no triumph ? Nay, what though  
The yellow blood of Trade meanwhile  
should pour

Along its arteries a shrunken flow,  
And the idle canvas droop around the  
shore ?

These do not make a state,  
Nor keep it great;  
I think God made

The earth for man, not trade;  
And where each humblest human creature  
Can stand, no more suspicious or afraid,  
Erect and kingly in his right of nature,  
To heaven and earth knit with harmonious  
ties, —

Where I behold the exultation  
Of manhood glowing in those eyes

That had been dark for ages,  
Or only lit with bestial loves and  
rages,

There I behold a Nation:

The France which lies

Between the Pyrenees and Rhine

Is the least part of France;

I see her rather in the soul whose shine  
Burns through the craftsman's grimy  
countenance,

In the new energy divine  
Of Toil's enfranchised glance.

## VIII

And if it be a dream,

If the great Future be the little Past

'Neath a new mask, which drops and  
shows at last

The same weird, mocking face to balk  
and blast,

Yet, Muse, a gladder measure suits the  
theme,

And the Tyrtæan harp

Loves notes more resolute and sharp,  
Throbbing, as throbs the bosom, hot and  
fast:

Such visions are of morning,

Theirs is no vague forewarning,

The dreams which nations dream come true,  
And shape the world anew;

If this be a sleep,

Make it long, make it deep,

O Father, who sendest the harvests men reap!

While Labor so sleepeth,

His sorrow is gone,

No longer he weepeth,

But smileth and steepeth

His thoughts in the dawn;

He heareth Hope yonder

Rain, lark-like, her fancies,

His dreaming hands wander

Mid heart's-ease and pansies;

"'T is a dream ! 'T is a vision !"

Shrieks Mammon aghast;

"The day's broad derision

Will chase it at last;

Ye are mad, ye have taken

A slumbering kraken

For firm land of the Past !"

Ah ! if he awaken,

God shield us all then,

If this dream rudely shaken

Shall cheat him again !

## IX

Since first I heard our North-wind blow,

Since first I saw Atlantic throw

On our grim rocks his thunderous snow,

I loved thee, Freedom; as a boy  
 The rattle of thy shield at Marathon  
 Did with a Grecian joy  
 Through all my pulses run;  
 But I have learned to love thee now  
 Without the helm upon thy gleaming brow,  
 A maiden mild and undefiled  
 Like her who bore the world's redeeming  
 child;

And surely never did thine altars glance  
 With purer fires than now in France;  
 While, in their clear white flashes,  
 Wrong's shadow, backward cast,  
 Waves cowering o'er the ashes  
 Of the dead, blaspheming Past,  
 O'er the shapes of fallen giants,  
 His own unburied brood,  
 Whose dead hands clench defiance  
 At the overpowering Good:

And down the happy future runs a flood  
 Of prophesying light;  
 It shows an Earth no longer stained with  
 blood,  
 Blossom and fruit where now we see the bud  
 Of Brotherhood and Right.

#### ANTI-APIS

PRAISEST Law, friend? We, too, love it  
 much as they that love it best;  
 'T is the deep, august foundation, whereon  
 Peace and Justice rest;  
 On the rock primeval, hidden in the Past  
 its bases be,  
 Block by block the endeavoring Ages built  
 it up to what we see.

But dig down: the Old unbury; thou shalt  
 find on every stone  
 That each Age hath carved the symbol of  
 what god to them was known,  
 Ugly shapes and brutish sometimes, but  
 the fairest that they knew;  
 If their sight were dim and earthward, yet  
 their hope and aim were true.

Surely as the unconscious needle feels the  
 far-off loadstar draw,  
 So strives every gracious nature to at-one  
 itself with law;  
 And the elder Saints and Sages laid their  
 pious framework right  
 By a theocratic instinct covered from the  
 people's sight.

As their gods were, so their laws were;  
 Thor the strong could reave and  
 steal,  
 So through many a peaceful inlet tore the  
 Norseman's eager keel;  
 But a new law came when Christ came,  
 and not blameless, as before,  
 Can we, paying him our lip-tithes, give our  
 lives and faiths to Thor.

Law is holy: ay, but what law? Is there  
 nothing more divine  
 Than the patched-up broils of Congress,  
 venal, full of meat and wine?  
 Is there, say you, nothing higher? Naught,  
 God save us! that transcends  
 Laws of cotton texture, wove by vulgar  
 men for vulgar ends?

Did Jehovah ask their counsel, or submit  
 to them a plan,  
 Ere he filled with loves, hopes, longings,  
 this aspiring heart of man?  
 For their edict does the soul wait, ere it  
 swing round to the pole  
 Of the true, the free, the God-willed, all  
 that makes it be a soul?

Law is holy; but not your law, ye who  
 keep the tablets whole  
 While ye dash the Law to pieces, shatter it  
 in life and soul;  
 Bearing up the Ark is lightsome, golden  
 Apis hid within,  
 While we Levites share the offerings, richer  
 by the people's sin.

Give to Cæsar what is Cæsar's? yes, but  
 tell me, if you can,  
 Is this superscription Cæsar's here upon  
 our brother man?  
 Is not here some other's image, dark and  
 sullied though it be,  
 In this fellow-soul that worships, struggles  
 Godward even as we?

It was not to such a future that the May-  
 flower's prow was turned,  
 Not to such a faith the martyrs clung, ex-  
 ulting as they burned;  
 Not by such laws are men fashioned, ear-  
 nest, simple, valiant, great  
 In the household virtues whereon rests the  
 unconquerable state.



Ah ! there is a higher gospel, overhead the  
 God-roof springs,  
 And each glad, obedient planet like a  
 golden shuttle sings  
 Through the web which Time is weaving  
 in his never-resting loom,  
 Weaving seasons many-colored, bringing  
 prophecy to doom.

Think you Truth a farthing rushlight, to  
 be pinched out when you will  
 With your deft official fingers, and your  
 politicians' skill ?  
 Is your God a wooden fetish, to be hidden  
 out of sight  
 That his block eyes may not see you do the  
 thing that is not right ?

But the Destinies think not so; to their  
 judgment-chamber lone  
 Comes no noise of popular clamor, there  
 Fame's trumpet is not blown;  
 Your majorities they reckon not; that you  
 grant, but then you say  
 That you differ with them somewhat, —  
 which is stronger, you or they ?

Patient are they as the insects that build  
 islands in the deep;  
 They hurl not the bolted thunder, but their  
 silent way they keep;  
 Where they have been that we know;  
 where empires towered that were  
 not just;  
 Lo ! the skulking wild fox scratches in a  
 little heap of dust.

## A PARABLE

SAID Christ our Lord, "I will go and see  
 How the men, my brethren, believe in me."  
 He passed not again through the gate of  
 birth,  
 But made himself known to the children of  
 earth.

Then said the chief priests, and rulers, and  
 kings,  
 "Behold, now, the Giver of all good things;  
 Go to, let us welcome with pomp and state  
 Him who alone is mighty and great."

With carpets of gold the ground they  
 spread  
 Wherever the Son of Man should tread,

And in palace-chambers lofty and rare  
 They lodged him, and served him with  
 kingly fare.

Great organs surged through arches dim  
 Their jubilant floods in praise of him;  
 And in church, and palace, and judgment-  
 hall,  
 He saw his own image high over all.

But still, wherever his steps they led,  
 The Lord in sorrow bent down his head,  
 And from under the heavy foundation-  
 stones,  
 The son of Mary heard bitter groans.

And in church, and palace, and judgment-  
 hall,  
 He marked great fissures that rent the wall,  
 And opened wider and yet more wide  
 As the living foundation heaved and sighed.

"Have ye founded your thrones and altars,  
 then,  
 On the bodies and souls of living men ?  
 And think ye that building shall endure,  
 Which shelters the noble and crushes the  
 poor ?

"With gates of silver and bars of gold  
 Ye have fenced my sheep from their  
 Father's fold;  
 I have heard the dropping of their tears  
 In heaven these eighteen hundred years."

"O Lord and Master, not ours the guilt,  
 We build but as our fathers built;  
 Behold thine images, how they stand,  
 Sovereign and sole, through all our land.

"Our task is hard, — with sword and flame  
 To hold thine earth forever the same,  
 And with sharp crooks of steel to keep  
 Still, as thou leftest them, thy sheep."

Then Christ sought out an artisan,  
 A low-browed, stunted, haggard man,  
 And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin  
 Pushed from her faintly want and sin.

These set he in the midst of them,  
 And as they drew back their garment-  
 hem,  
 For fear of defilement, "Lo, here," said he,  
 "The images ye have made of me !"

## ODE

WRITTEN FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE  
INTRODUCTION OF THE COCHITUATE  
WATER INTO THE CITY OF BOSTON

The public system of water works in Boston dates from October 25, 1848, when with much ceremony the water of Lake Cochituate, formerly called Long Pond, was turned into the reservoir which then occupied the site of the present extension of the State House, and a stream was conducted into the Frog Pond on Boston Common, where the pressure gave head to a fine jet. Besides the Ode, a selection was sung from the oratorio of *Elijah*, and addresses were made by the mayor and the chairman of the water commissioners.

My name is Water: I have sped  
Through strange, dark ways, untried  
before,  
By pure desire of friendship led,  
Cochituate's ambassador;  
He sends four royal gifts by me:  
Long life, health, peace, and purity.

I'm Ceres' cup-bearer; I pour,  
For flowers and fruits and all their kin,  
Her crystal vintage, from of yore  
Stored in old Earth's selectest bin,  
Flora's Falernian ripe, since God  
The wine-press of the deluge trod.

In that far isle whence, iron-willed,  
The New World's sires their bark un-  
moored,  
The fairies' acorn-cups I filled  
Upon the toadstool's silver board,  
And, 'neath Herne's oak, for Shakespeare's  
sight,  
Strewed moss and grass with diamonds  
bright.

No fairies in the Mayflower came,  
And, lightsome as I sparkle here,  
For Mother Bay State, busy dame,  
I've toiled and drudged this many a  
year,  
Throbbled in her engines' iron veins,  
Twirled myriad spindles for her gains.

I, too, can weave: the warp I set  
Through which the sun his shuttle  
throws,

And, bright as Noah saw it, yet  
For you the arching rainbow glows,  
A sight in Paradise denied  
To unfallen Adam and his bride.

When Winter held me in his grip,  
You seized and sent me o'er the wave,  
Ungrateful! in a prison-ship;  
But I forgive, not long a slave,  
For, soon as summer south-winds blew,  
Homeward I fled, disguised as dew.

For countless services I'm fit,  
Of use, of pleasure, and of gain,  
But lightly from all bonds I flit,  
Nor lose my mirth, nor feel a stain;  
From mill and wash-tub I escape,  
And take in heaven my proper shape.

So, free myself, to-day, elate  
I come from far o'er hill and mead,  
And here, Cochituate's envoy, wait  
To be your blithesome Ganymede,  
And brim your cups with nectar true  
That never will make slaves of you.

## LINES

SUGGESTED BY THE GRAVES OF TWO  
ENGLISH SOLDIERS ON CONCORD BAT-  
TLE-GROUND

THE same good blood that now refills  
The dotard Orient's shrunk veins,  
The same whose vigor westward thrills,  
Bursting Nevada's silver chains,  
Poured here upon the April grass,  
Freckled with red the herbage new;  
On reeled the battle's trampling mass,  
Back to the ash the bluebird flew.

Poured here in vain; — that sturdy blood  
Was meant to make the earth more green,  
But in a higher, gentler mood  
Than broke this April noon serene;  
Two graves are here: to mark the place,  
At head and foot, an unhewn stone,  
O'er which the herald lichens trace  
The blazon of Oblivion.

These men were brave enough, and true  
To the hired soldier's bull-dog creed;  
What brought them here they never knew,  
They fought as suits the English breed:

They came three thousand miles, and died,  
To keep the Past upon its throne;  
Unheard, beyond the ocean tide,  
Their English mother made her moan.

The turf that covers them no thrill  
Sends up to fire the heart and brain;  
No stronger purpose nerves the will,  
No hope renews its youth again:  
From farm to farm the Concord glides,  
And trails my fancy with its flow;  
O'erhead the balanced hen-hawk slides,  
Twinned in the river's heaven below.

But go, whose Bay State bosom stirs,  
Proud of thy birth and neighbor's right,  
Where sleep the heroic villagers  
Borne red and stiff from Concord fight;  
Thought Reuben, snatching down his gun,  
Or Seth, as ebb'd the life away,  
What earthquake rifts would shoot and run  
World-wide from that short April fray?

What then? With heart and hand they  
wrought,  
According to their village light;  
'T was for the Future that they fought,  
Their rustic faith in what was right.  
Upon earth's tragic stage they burst  
Unsummoned, in the humble sock;  
Theirs the fifth act; the curtain first  
Rose long ago on Charles's block.

Their graves have voices; if they threw  
Dice charged with fates beyond their ken,  
Yet to their instincts they were true,  
And had the genius to be men.  
Fine privilege of Freedom's host,  
Of humblest soldiers for the Right! —  
Age after age ye hold your post,  
Your graves send courage forth, and  
might.

## TO ———

WE, too, have autumns, when our leaves  
Drop loosely through the dampened air,  
When all our good seems bound in sheaves,  
And we stand reaped and bare.

Our seasons have no fixed returns,  
Without our will they come and go;  
At noon our sudden summer burns,  
Ere sunset all is snow.

But each day brings less summer cheer,  
Crimps more our ineffectual spring,  
And something earlier every year  
Our singing birds take wing.

As less the olden glow abides,  
And less the chillier heart aspires,  
With drift-wood beached in past spring-  
tides  
We light our sullen fires.

By the pinched rushlight's starving beam  
We cower and strain our wasted sight,  
To stitch youth's shroud up, seam by seam,  
In the long arctic night.

It was not so — we once were young —  
When Spring, to womanly Summer turn-  
ing,  
Her dew-drops on each grass-blade strung,  
In the red sunrise burning.

We trusted then, aspired, believed  
That earth could be remade to-morrow;  
Ah, why be ever undecieved?  
Why give up faith for sorrow?

O thou, whose days are yet all spring,  
Faith, blighted one, is past retrieving;  
Experience is a dumb, dead thing;  
The victory 's in believing.

## FREEDOM

In a letter to Mr. Norton, written June 29, 1859, Mr. Lowell refers to English comments on the Austro-Italian war, then in its early stages, and alludes to a quotation which Mr. Bright had made from his writings. "But," he says, "I fear he thinks me too much of a Quaker. In my *Poems* there are some verses on 'Freedom' written in '48 or '49. They ended thus as originally written. I left the verses out only because I did not think them good, — not because I did not like the sentiment. I have strength of mind enough not to change a word — though I see how much better I might make it." He then copies the lines which below are separated from the poem by a long dash, and adds: "I think it must have been written in 1848, for I remember that, as I first composed it, it had 'Fair Italy' instead of 'Humanity'."

ARE we, then, wholly fallen? Can it be  
That thou, North wind, that from thy  
mountains bringest

Their spirit to our plains, and thou, blue  
sea,

Who on our rocks thy wreaths of freedom  
flingest,

As on an altar, — can it be that ye  
Have wasted inspiration on dead ears,  
Dulled with the too familiar clank of  
chains?

The people's heart is like a harp for years  
Hung where some petrifying torrent rains  
Its slow-incrusting spray: the stiffened  
chords

Faint and more faint make answer to the  
tears

That drip upon them: idle are all words:  
Only a golden plectrum wakes the tone  
Deep buried 'neath that ever-thickening  
stone.

We are not free: doth Freedom, then, con-  
sist

In musing with our faces toward the Past,  
While petty cares and crawling interests  
twist

Their spider-threads about us, which at last  
Grow strong as iron chains, to cramp and  
bind

In formal narrowness heart, soul, and  
mind?

Freedom is recreated year by year,  
In hearts wide open on the Godward side,  
In souls calm-cadenced as the whirling  
sphere,

In minds that sway the future like a tide.  
No broadest creeds can hold her, and no  
codes;

She chooses men for her august abodes,  
Building them fair and fronting to the  
dawn;

Yet, when we seek her, we but find a few  
Light footprints, leading morn-ward  
through the dew:

Before the day had risen, she was gone.

And we must follow: swiftly runs she on,  
And, if our steps should slacken in despair,  
Half turns her face, half smiles through  
golden hair,

Forever yielding, never wholly won:  
That is not love which pauses in the race  
Two close-linked names on fleeting sand  
to trace;

Freedom gained yesterday is no more ours;  
Men gather but dry seeds of last year's  
flowers;

Still there's a charm ungranted, still a  
grace,

Still rosy Hope, the free, the unattained,  
Makes us Possession's languid hand let  
fall;

'T is but a fragment of ourselves is gained,  
The Future brings us more, but never all.

And, as the finder of some unknown realm,  
Mounting a summit whence he thinks to  
see

On either side of him the imprisoning sea,  
Beholds, above the clouds that overwhelm  
The valley-land, peak after snowy peak  
Stretch out of sight, each like a silver  
helm

Beneath its plume of smoke, sublime and  
bleak,

And what he thought an island finds to be  
A continent to him first oped, — so we  
Can from our height of Freedom look along  
A boundless future, ours if we be strong;  
Or if we shrink, better remount our ships  
And, fleeing God's express design, trace  
back

The hero-freighted Mayflower's prophet-  
track

To Europe entering her blood-red eclipse.

Therefore of Europe now I will not doubt,  
For the broad foreheads surely win the  
day,

And brains, not crowns or soul-gelt armies,  
weigh

In Fortune's scales: such dust she brushes  
out.

Most gracious are the conquests of the  
Word,

Gradual and silent as a flower's increase,  
And the best guide from old to new is  
Peace —

Yet, Freedom, thou canst sanctify the  
sword!

Bravely to do whate'er the time demands,  
Whether with pen or sword, and not to  
flinch,

This is the task that fits heroic hands;  
So are Truth's boundaries widened inch by  
inch.

I do not love the Peace which tyrants  
make;

The calm she breeds let the sword's light-  
ning break!



It is the tyrants who have beaten out  
 Ploughshares and pruning-hooks to spears  
 and swords,  
 And shall I pause and moralize and doubt ?  
 Whose veins run water let him mete his  
 words!  
 Each fetter sundered is the whole world's  
 gain!  
 And rather than humanity remain  
 A pearl beneath the feet of Austrian swine,  
 Welcome to me whatever breaks a chain.  
*That* surely is of God, and all divine !

## BIBLIOLATRES

BOWING thyself in dust before a Book,  
 And thinking the great God is thine alone,  
 O rash iconoclast, thou wilt not brook  
 What gods the heathen carves in wood and  
 stone,  
 As if the Shepherd who from the outer  
 cold  
 Leads all his shivering lambs to one sure  
 fold  
 Were careful for the fashion of his crook.

There is no broken reed so poor and base,  
 No rush, the bending tilt of swamp-fly  
 blue,  
 But He therewith the ravening wolf can  
 chase,  
 And guide his flock to springs and pastures  
 new;  
 Through ways unlooked for, and through  
 many lands,  
 Far from the rich folds built with human  
 hands,  
 The gracious footprints of his love I trace.

And what art thou, own brother of the clod,  
 That from his hand the crook wouldst  
 snatch away  
 And shake instead thy dry and sapless rod,  
 To scare the sheep out of the wholesome  
 day ?  
 Yea, what art thou, blind, unconverted  
 Jew,  
 That with thy idol-volume's covers two  
 Wouldst make a jail to coop the living  
 God ?

Thou hear'st not well the mountain organ-  
 tones  
 By prophet ears from Hor and Sinai caught,

Thinking the cisterns of those Hebrew  
 brains  
 Drew dry the springs of the All-knower's  
 thought,  
 Nor shall thy lips be touched with living  
 fire,  
 Who blow'st old altar-coals with sole  
 desire  
 To weld anew the spirit's broken chains.

God is not dumb, that He should speak no  
 more;  
 If thou hast wanderings in the wilder-  
 ness  
 And find'st not Sinai, 't is thy soul is poor;  
 There towers the Mountain of the Voice no  
 less,  
 Which whoso seeks shall find, but he who  
 bends,  
 Intent on manna still and mortal ends,  
 Sees it not, neither hears its thundered  
 lore.

Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,  
 And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone;  
 Each age, each kindred, adds a' verse to it,  
 Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.  
 While swings the sea, while mists the  
 mountains shroud,  
 While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of  
 cloud,  
 Still at the prophets' feet the nations sit.

## BEAVER BROOK

... "Don't you like the poem [*Beaver Brook*] I sent you last week ? I was inclined to think pretty well of it, but I have not seen it in print yet. The little mill stands in a valley between one of the spurs of Wellington Hill and the main summit, just on the edge of Waltham. It is surely one of the loveliest spots in the world. It is one of my lions, and if you will make me a visit this spring I will take you up to hear it roar, and I will show you 'the oaks' — the largest, I fancy, left in the country." *Letters* I. 149. The poem was sent to Mr. Gay for the *Standard*. These oaks are now known as the Waverley Oaks, and are to be preserved.

HUSHED with broad sunlight lies the hill,  
 And, minuting the long day's loss,  
 The cedar's shadow, slow and still,  
 Creeps o'er its dial of gray moss.

Warm noon brims full the valley's cup,  
The aspen's leaves are scarce astir;  
Only the little mill sends up  
Its busy, never-ceasing burr.

Climbing the loose-piled wall that hems  
The road along the mill-pond's brink,  
From 'neath the arching barberry-stems,  
My footstep scares the shy chewink.

Beneath a bony buttonwood  
The mill's red door lets forth the din;  
The whitened miller, dust-imbued,  
Flits past the square of dark within.

No mountain torrent's strength is here;  
Sweet Beaver, child of forest still,  
Heaps its small pitcher to the ear,  
And gently waits the miller's will.

Swift slips Undine along the race  
Unheard, and then, with flashing bound,  
Floods the dull wheel with light and grace,  
And, laughing, hunts the loath drudge  
round.

The miller dreams not at what cost  
The quivering millstones hum and whirl,

Nor how for every turn are tost  
Armfuls of diamond and of pearl.

But Summer cleared my happier eyes  
With drops of some celestial juice,  
To see how Beauty underlies  
Forevermore each form of use.

And more; methought I saw that flood,  
Which now so dull and darkling steals,  
Thick, here and there, with human blood,  
To turn the world's laborious wheels.

No more than doth the miller there,  
Shut in our several cells, do we  
Know with what waste of beauty rare  
Moves every day's machinery.

Surely the wiser time shall come  
When this fine overplus of might,  
No longer sullen, slow, and dumb,  
Shall leap to music and to light.

In that new childhood of the Earth  
Life of itself shall dance and play,  
Fresh blood in Time's shrunk veins make  
mirth,  
And labor meet delight half-way.

## MEMORIAL VERSES

### KOSSUTH

A RACE of nobles may die out,  
A royal line may leave no heir;  
Wise Nature sets no guards about  
Her pewter plate and wooden ware.

But they fail not, the kinglier breed,  
Who starry diadems attain;  
To dungeon, axe, and stake succeed  
Heirs of the old heroic strain.

The zeal of Nature never cools,  
Nor is she thwarted of her ends;  
When gapped and dulled her cheaper tools,  
Then she a saint and prophet spends.

Land of the Magyars! though it be  
The tyrant may relink his chain,  
Already thine the victory,  
As the just Future measures gain.

Thou hast succeeded, thou hast won  
The deathly travail's amplest worth;  
A nation's duty thou hast done,  
Giving a hero to our earth.

And he, let come what will of woe,  
Hath saved the land he strove to save;  
No Cossack hordes, no traitor's blow,  
Can quench the voice shall haunt his  
grave.

"I Kossuth am: O Future, thou  
That clear'st the just and blott'st the vile,  
O'er this small dust in reverence bow,  
Remembering what I was erewhile.

"I was the chosen trump wherethrough  
Our God sent forth awakening breath;  
Came chains? Came death? The strain  
He blew  
Sounds on, outliving chains and death."

TO LAMARTINE

1848

I DID not praise thee when the crowd,  
 'Witched with the moment's inspira-  
 tion,  
 Vexed thy still ether with hosannas loud,  
 And stamped their dusty adoration;  
 I but looked upward with the rest,  
 And, when they shouted Greatest, whis-  
 pered Best.

They raised thee not, but rose to thee,  
 Their fickle wreaths about thee fling-  
 ing;  
 So on some marble Phœbus the swol'n sea  
 Might leave his worthless seaweed  
 clinging,  
 But pious hands, with reverent care,  
 Make the pure limbs once more sublimely  
 bare.

Now thou 'rt thy plain, grand self again,  
 Thou art secure from panegyric,  
 Thou who gav'st politics an epic strain,  
 And actedst Freedom's noblest lyric;  
 This side the Blessed Isles, no tree  
 Grows green enough to make a wreath for  
 thee.

Nor can blame cling to thee; the snow  
 From swinish footprints takes no stain-  
 ing,  
 But, leaving the gross soils of earth below,  
 Its spirit mounts, the skies regaining,  
 And unresentful falls again,  
 To beautify the world with dew and rain.

The highest duty to mere man vouchsafed  
 Was laid on thee, — out of wild chaos,  
 When the roused popular ocean foamed  
 and chafed  
 And vulture War from his Imaus  
 Snuffed blood, to summon homely Peace,  
 And show that only order is release.

To carve thy fullest thought, what though  
 Time was not granted? Aye in his-  
 tory,  
 Like that Dawn's face which baffled Angelo  
 Left shapeless, grander for its mystery,  
 Thy great Design shall stand, and day  
 Flood its blind front from Orients far  
 away.

Who says thy day is o'er? Control,  
 My heart, that bitter first emotion  
 While men shall reverence the steal-  
 soul,  
 The heart in silent self-devotion  
 Breaking, the mild, heroic mien,  
 Thou 'lt need no prop of marble, Lamar-  
 tine.

If France reject thee, 't is not thine,  
 But her own, exile that she utters;  
 Ideal France, the deathless, the divine  
 Will be where thy white pennon flut-  
 ters,  
 As once the nobler Athens went  
 With Aristides into banishment.

No fitting metewand hath To-day  
 For measuring spirits of thy stature;  
 Only the Future can reach up to lay  
 The laurel on that lofty nature,  
 Bard, who with some diviner art  
 Hast touched the bard's true lyre, a na-  
 heart.

Swept by thy hand, the gladdened chime  
 Crashed now in discords fiercer  
 others,  
 Gave forth one note beyond all skill  
 words,  
 And chimed together, We are bro-  
 O poem unsurpassed! it ran  
 All round the world, unlocking man's  
 man.

France is too poor to pay alone  
 The service of that ample spirit;  
 Paltry seem low dictatorship and throne  
 Weighed with thy self-renouncing  
 merit;  
 They had to thee been rust and loss  
 Thy aim was higher, — thou hast climbed  
 a Cross!

TO JOHN GORHAM PALFREY

Dr. Palfrey, whose name is for student  
 associated mainly with his *History of New En-  
 land*, was one of the most consistent and  
 anti-slavery men of his day. Chosen to  
 gress as a Whig member, he refused to su-  
 the Whig candidate for the Speakership of  
 House, because he was assured that the c-  
 date, Mr. Winthrop, would not use his po-  
 to obstruct the extension of the slave p-

This incident called out the fourth of the first series of *Biglow Papers*.

THERE are who triumph in a losing cause,  
Who can put on defeat, as 't were a wreath  
Unwithering in the adverse popular breath,  
Safe from the blasting demagogue's applause;  
'T is they who stand for Freedom and  
God's laws.

And so stands Palfrey now, as Marvell  
stood,  
Loyal to Truth dethroned, nor could be  
wooed

To trust the playful tiger's velvet paws:  
And if the second Charles brought in decay  
Of ancient virtue, if it well might wring  
Souls that had broadened 'neath a nobler  
day,

To see a losel, marketable king  
Fearfully watering with his realm's best  
blood

Cromwell's quenched bolts, that erst had  
cracked and flamed,  
Searing, through all their depths of courtier  
mud,

Europe's crowned bloodsuckers, — how  
more ashamed

Ought we to be, who see Corruption's flood  
Still rise o'er last year's mark, to mine  
away

Our brazen idol's feet of treacherous  
clay!

utter degradation! Freedom turned  
Slavery's vile bawd, to cozen and betray  
To the old lecher's clutch a maiden prey,  
if so a loathsome pander's fee be earned!

And we are silent, — we who daily tread  
A soil sublime, at least, with heroes'  
graves! —

Beckon no more, shades of the noble  
dead!

Be dumb, ye heaven-touched lips of winds  
and waves!

Or hope to rouse some Coptic dullard,  
hid

Ages ago, wrapt stiffly, fold on fold,  
With cerements close, to wither in the cold,  
Forever hushed, and sunless pyramid!

Beauty and Truth, and all that these  
contain,

Drop not like ripened fruit about our feet;  
We climb to them through years of  
sweat and pain;

Without long struggle, none did e'er at-  
tain

The downward look from Quiet's blissful  
seat:

Though present loss may be the hero's  
part,

Yet none can rob him of the victor heart  
Whereby the broad-realmed future is sub-  
dued,

And Wrong, which now insults from tri-  
umph's car,

Sending her vulture hope to raven far,  
Is made unwilling tributary of Good.

O Mother State, how quenched thy Sinai  
fires!

Is there none left of thy stanch May-  
flower breed?

No spark among the ashes of thy sires,  
Of Virtue's altar-flame the kindling  
seed?

Are these thy great men, these that cringe  
and creep,

And writhe through slimy ways to place  
and power? —

How long, O Lord, before thy wrath shall  
reap

Our frail-stemmed summer prosperings  
in their flower?

Oh for one hour of that undaunted stock  
That went with Vane and Sidney to the  
block!

Oh for a whiff of Naseby, that would  
sweep,

With its stern Puritan besom, all this  
chaff

From the Lord's threshing-floor! Yet  
more than half

The victory is attained, when one or two,  
Through the fool's laughter and the  
traitor's scorn,

Beside thy sepulchre can bide the morn,  
Crucified Truth, when thou shalt rise  
anew.

TO W. L. GARRISON

"Some time afterward, it was reported to  
me by the city officers that they had ferreted  
out the paper and its editor; that his office



was an obscure hole, his only visible auxiliary a negro boy, and his supporters a few very insignificant persons of all colors."—*Letter of H. G. Otis.*

This significant sentence printed at its head gave the key-note to the following poem, but it is interesting to read the characterization of Garrison drawn by Mr. Lowell at this same time, in a letter to C. F. Briggs dated March 26, 1848. "I do not agree with the abolitionists in their disunion and non-voting theories. They treat ideas as ignorant persons do cherries. They think them unwholesome unless they are swallowed, stones and all. Garrison is so used to standing alone that, like Daniel Boone, he moves away as the world creeps up to him, and goes farther into the wilderness. He considers every step a step forward, though it be over the edge of a precipice. But, with all his faults (and they are the faults of his position) he is a great and extraordinary man. His work may be over, but it has been a great work. . . . I respect Garrison (respect does not include love). Remember that Garrison was so long in a position where he alone was right and all the world wrong, that such a position has created in him a habit of mind which may remain, though circumstances have wholly changed. Indeed a mind of that cast is essential to a Reformer. Luther was as infallible as any man that ever held St. Peter's keys." *Letters* I. 125, 126.

In a small chamber, friendless and unseen,

Toiled o'er his types one poor, unlearned young man;

The place was dark, unfurnished, and mean;

Yet there the freedom of a race began.

Help came but slowly; surely no man yet

Put lever to the heavy world with less:

What need of help? He knew how types were set,

He had a dauntless spirit, and a press.

Such earnest natures are the fiery pith,

The compact nucleus, round which systems grow;

Mass after mass becomes inspired therewith,

And whirls impregnate with the central glow.

O Truth! O Freedom! how are ye still born

In the rude stable, in the manger nurst!

What humble hands unbar those gates of morn

Through which the splendors of the New Day burst!

What! shall one monk, scarce known beyond his cell,

Front Rome's far-reaching bolts, and scorn her frown?

Brave Luther answered YES; that thunder's swell

Rocked Europe, and discharmed the triple crown.

Whatever can be known of earth we know,  
Sneered Europe's wise men, in their snail-shells curled;

No! said one man in Genoa, and that No  
Out of the darkness summoned this New World.

Who is it will not dare himself to trust?

Who is it hath not strength to stand alone?

Who is it thwarts and bilks the inward MUST?

He and his works, like sand, from earth are blown.

Men of a thousand shifts and wiles, look here!

See one straightforward conscience put in pawn

To win a world; see the obedient sphere

By bravery's simple gravitation drawn!

Shall we not heed the lesson taught of old,

And by the Present's lips repeated still,

In our own single manhood to be bold,

Fortressed in conscience and impregnable will?

We stride the river daily at its spring,

Nor, in our childish thoughtlessness, foresee

What myriad vassal streams shall tribute bring,

How like an equal it shall greet the sea.

O small beginnings, ye are great and strong,  
Based on a faithful heart and weariless brain!

Ye build the future fair, ye conquer wrong,  
Ye earn the crown, and wear it not in vain.

ON THE DEATH OF CHARLES  
TURNER TORREY

The Martyr Torrey was the name applied to this clergyman, who gave up his professional life in order to devote himself to the anti-slavery cause in Maryland. He was condemned to long imprisonment for aiding in the escape of slaves, but died in the penitentiary, May, 1846, of disease brought on by ill usage. His body was taken to Boston, and the funeral made a profound impression on the community.

WOE worth the hour when it is crime  
To plead the poor dumb bondman's cause,  
When all that makes the heart sublime,  
The glorious throbs that conquer time,  
Are traitors to our cruel laws !

He strove among God's suffering poor  
One gleam of brotherhood to send;  
The dungeon oped its hungry door  
To give the truth one martyr more,  
Then shut, — and here behold the end !

O Mother State ! when this was done,  
No pitying throe thy bosom gave;  
Silent thou saw'st the death-shroud spun,  
And now thou givest to thy son  
The stranger's charity, — a grave.

Must it be thus forever ? No !  
The hand of God sows not in vain,  
Long sleeps the darkling seed below,  
The seasons come, and change, and go,  
And all the fields are deep with grain.

Although our brother lie asleep,  
Man's heart still struggles, still aspires;  
His grave shall quiver yet, while deep  
Through the brave Bay State's pulses leap  
Her ancient energies and fires.

When hours like this the senses' gush  
Have stilled, and left the spirit room,  
It hears amid the eternal hush  
The swooping pinions' dreadful rush,  
That bring the vengeance and the  
doom; —

Not man's brute vengeance, such as rends  
What rivets man to man apart, —  
God doth not so bring round his ends,  
But waits the ripened time, and sends  
His mercy to the oppressor's heart.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF DR.  
CHANNING

I do not come to weep above thy pall,  
And mourn the dying - out of noble  
powers;  
The poet's clearer eye should see, in all  
Earth's seeming woe, seed of immortal  
flowers.

Truth needs no champions: in the infinit-  
deep  
Of everlasting Soul her strength abides  
From Nature's heart her mighty pulse  
leap,  
Through Nature's veins her strength  
undying, tides.

Peace is more strong than war, and gentle-  
ness,  
Where force were vain, makes conquest  
o'er the wave;  
And love lives on and hath a power to  
bless,  
When they who loved are hidden in the  
grave.

The sculptured marble brags of death  
strewn fields,  
And Glory's epitaph is writ in blood;  
But Alexander now to Plato yields,  
Clarkson will stand where Wellington  
hath stood.

I watch the circle of the eternal years,  
And read forever in the storied page  
One lengthened roll of blood, and wrong,  
and tears,  
One onward step of Truth from age to  
age.

The poor are crushed; the tyrants link  
their chain;  
The poet sings through narrow dun-  
geon-grates;  
Man's hope lies quenched; and, lo ! with  
steadfast gain  
Freedom doth forge her mail of adverse  
fates.

Men slay the prophets; fagot, rack, and  
cross  
Make up the groaning record of the  
past;

But Evil's triumphs are her endless loss,  
And sovereign Beauty wins the soul at  
last.

No power can die that ever wrought for  
Truth;

Thereby a law of Nature it became,  
And lives unwithered in its blithesome  
youth,  
When he who called it forth is but a  
name.

Therefore I cannot think thee wholly gone;  
The better part of thee is with us still;  
Thy soul its hampering clay aside hath  
thrown,  
And only freer wrestles with the Ill.

Thou livest in the life of all good things;  
What words thou spak'st for Freedom  
shall not die;  
Thou sleepest not, for now thy Love hath  
wings  
To soar where hence thy Hope could  
hardly fly.

And often, from that other world, on this  
Some gleams from great souls gone be-  
fore may shine,  
To shed on struggling hearts a clearer bliss,  
And clothe the Right with lustre more  
divine.

Thou art not idle: in thy higher sphere  
Thy spirit bends itself to loving tasks,  
And strength to perfect what it dreamed  
of here  
Is all the crown and glory that it asks.

For sure, in Heaven's wide chambers, there  
is room  
For love and pity, and for helpful deeds;  
Else were our summons thither but a doom  
To life more vain than this in clayey  
weeds.

From off the starry mountain-peak of song,  
Thy spirit shows me, in the coming time,  
An earth unwithered by the foot of wrong,  
A race revering its own soul sublime.

What wars, what martyrdoms, what crimes,  
may come,  
Thou knowest not, nor I; but God will  
lead

The prodigal soul from want and sorrow  
home,  
And Eden ope her gates to Adam's seed.

Farewell! good man, good angel now!  
this hand  
Soon, like thine own, shall lose its cun-  
ning too;  
Soon shall this soul, like thine, bewildered  
stand,  
Then leap to thread the free, unfathomed  
blue:

When that day comes, oh, may this hand  
grow cold,  
Busy, like thine, for Freedom and the  
Right;  
Oh, may this soul, like thine, be ever bold  
To face dark Slavery's encroaching  
blight!

This laurel-leaf I cast upon thy bier;  
Let worthier hands than these thy wreath  
intwine;  
Upon thy hearse I shed no useless tear, —  
For us weep rather thou in calm divine!

## TO THE MEMORY OF HOOD

ANOTHER star 'neath Time's horizon  
dropped,  
To gleam o'er unknown lands and seas;  
Another heart that beat for freedom  
stopped, —  
What mournful words are these!

O Love Divine, that claspest our tired  
earth,  
And lullest it upon thy heart,  
Thou knowest how much a gentle soul is  
worth  
To teach men what thou art!

His was a spirit that to all thy poor  
Was kind as slumber after pain:  
Why ope so soon thy heaven-deep Quiet's  
door  
And call him home again?

Freedom needs all her poets: it is they  
Who give her aspirations wings,  
And to the wiser law of music sway  
Her wild imaginings.

Yet thou hast called him, nor art thou unkind,

O Love Divine, for 't is thy will  
That gracious natures leave their love behind

To work for Mercy still.

Let laurelled marbles weigh on other tombs,

Let anthems peal for other dead,  
Rustling the bannered depth of minster-glooms

With their exulting spread.

His epitaph shall mock the short-lived stone,

No lichen shall its lines efface,  
He needs these few and simple lines alone

To mark his resting-place:—

"Here lies a Poet. Stranger, if to thee  
His claim to memory be obscure,  
If thou wouldst learn how truly great was he,

Go, ask it of the poor."

## THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

THIS poem was written apparently early in 1848, for in a letter to Mr. Briggs, dated February 1 of that year, Lowell, referring to it, says: "The new poem I spoke of is a sort of a story, and more likely to be popular than what I write generally. Maria thinks very highly of it. I shall probably publish it by itself next summer." The poem was published in the middle of December, 1848, and in an exuberant letter to Mr. Briggs shortly after it appeared, Lowell wrote: "Last night . . . I walked to Watertown over the snow with the new moon before me and a sky exactly like that in Page's evening landscape. Orion was rising behind me, and, as I stood on the hill just before you enter the village, the stillness of the fields around me was delicious, broken only by the tinkle of a little brook which runs too swiftly for Frost to catch it. My picture of the brook in *Sir Launfal* was drawn from it." The following note was prefixed to the poem by its author.

According to the mythology of the Romans, the *San Greal*, or Holy Grail, was the cup

out of which Jesus partook of the Last Supper with his disciples. It was brought into England by Joseph of Arimathea, and remained there, an object of pilgrimage and adoration, for many years in the keeping of his lineal descendants. It was incumbent upon those who had charge of it to be chaste in thought, word, and deed; but one of the keepers having broken this condition, the Holy Grail disappeared. From that time it was a favorite enterprise of the knights of Arthur's court to go in search of it. Sir Galahad was at last successful in finding it, as may be read in the seventeenth book of the *Romance of King Arthur*. Tennyson has made Sir Galahad the subject of one of the most exquisite of his poems.

The plot (if I may give that name to anything so slight) of the following poem is my own, and, to serve its purposes, I have enlarged the circle of competition in search of the miraculous cup in such a manner as to include, not only other persons than the heroes of the Round Table, but also a period of time subsequent to the supposed date of King Arthur's reign.

### PRELUDE TO PART FIRST

OVER his keys the musing organist,

Beginning doubtfully and far away,  
First lets his fingers wander as they list,  
And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay:

Then, as the touch of his loved instrument  
Gives hope and fervor, nearer draws his theme,

First guessed by faint auroral flushes sent  
Along the wavering vista of his dream.

Not only around our infancy  
Doth heaven with all its splendors lie;  
Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,  
We Sinais climb and know it not.

Over our manhood bend the skies;  
Against our fallen and traitor lives  
The great winds utter prophecies;  
With our faint hearts the mountain strives;

Its arms outstretched, the druid wood  
Waits with its benedicite;



And to our age's drowsy blood  
Still shouts the inspiring sea.

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives  
us;

The beggar is taxed for a corner to die  
in,

The priest hath his fee who comes and  
shrives us,

We bargain for the graves we lie in;  
At the devil's booth are all things sold,  
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of  
gold;

For a cap and bells our lives we pay,  
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's task-  
ing;

It is heaven alone that is given away,  
It is only God may be had for the ask-  
ing;

No price is set on the lavish summer;  
June may be had by the poorest comer.

And what is so rare as a day in June ?

Then, if ever, come perfect days;  
Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,

And over it softly her warm ear lays;  
Whether we look, or whether we listen,

We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;  
Every clod feels a stir of might,

An instinct within it that reaches and  
towers,

And, groping blindly above it for light,  
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;

The flush of life may well be seen

Thrilling back over hills and valleys;

The cowslip startles in meadows green,

The buttercup catches the sun in its  
chalice,

And there's never a leaf nor a blade too  
mean

To be some happy creature's palace;

The little bird sits at his door in the sun,

Attil like a blossom among the leaves,

And lets his illumined being o'errun

With the deluge of summer it receives;

His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,

And the heart in her dumb breast flutters  
and sings;

He sings to the wide world, and she to her  
nest, —

In the nice ear of Nature which song is the  
best ?

Now is the high-tide of the year,

And whatever of life hath ebbed away

Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,  
Into every bare inlet and creek and  
bay;

Now the heart is so full that a drop over-  
fills it,

We are happy now because God wills it;  
No matter how barren the past may have  
been,

'T is enough for us now that the leaves are  
green;

We sit in the warm shade and feel right  
well

How the sap creeps up and the blossoms  
swell;

We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help  
knowing

That skies are clear and grass is grow-  
ing;

The breeze comes whispering in our ear,  
That dandelions are blossoming near,

That maize has sprouted, that streams  
are flowing,

That the river is bluer than the sky,

That the robin is plastering his house hard  
by;

And if the breeze kept the good news  
back,

For other couriers we should not lack;

We could guess it all by yon heifer's  
lowing, —

And hark ! how clear bold chanticleer,

Warmed with the new wine of the year,

Tells all in his lusty crowing !

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how;

Everything is happy now,

Everything is upward striving;

'T is as easy now for the heart to be  
true

As for grass to be green or skies to be  
blue, —

'T is the natural way of living:

Who knows whither the clouds have fled ?

In the unscarred heaven they leave no  
wake;

And the eyes forget the tears they have  
shed,

The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;

The soul partakes the season's youth,

And the sulphurous rifts of passion and  
woe

Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,

Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.

What wonder if Sir Launfal now

Remembered the keeping of his vow ?

## PART FIRST

## I

"My golden spurs now bring to me,  
 And bring to me my richest mail,  
 For to-morrow I go over land and sea  
 In search of the Holy Grail;  
 Shall never a bed for me be spread,  
 Nor shall a pillow be under my head,  
 Till I begin my vow to keep;  
 Here on the rushes will I sleep,  
 And perchance there may come a vision  
 true  
 Ere day create the world anew."  
 Slowly Sir Launfal's eyes grew dim,  
 Slumber fell like a cloud on him,  
 And into his soul the vision flew.

## II

The crows flapped over by twos and threes,  
 In the pool drowsed the cattle up to their  
 knees,  
 The little birds sang as if it were  
 The one day of summer in all the year,  
 And the very leaves seemed to sing on the  
 trees:  
 The castle alone in the landscape lay  
 Like an outpost of winter, dull and gray:  
 'T was the proudest hall in the North  
 Countree,  
 And never its gates might opened be,  
 Save to lord or lady of high degree;  
 Summer besieged it on every side,  
 But the churlish stone her assaults defied;  
 She could not scale the chilly wall,  
 Though around it for leagues her pavilions  
 tall  
 Stretched left and right,  
 Over the hills and out of sight;  
 Green and broad was every tent,  
 And out of each a murmur went  
 Till the breeze fell off at night.

## III

The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang,  
 And through the dark arch a charger  
 sprang,  
 Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden knight,  
 In his gilded mail, that flamed so bright  
 It seemed the dark castle had gathered all  
 Those shafts the fierce sun had shot over  
 its wall  
 In his siege of three hundred summers  
 long,

And, binding them all in one blazing sheaf,  
 Had cast them forth: so, young and  
 strong,  
 And lightsome as a locust-leaf,  
 Sir Launfal flashed forth in his maiden  
 mail,  
 To seek in all climes for the Holy Grail.

## IV

It was morning on hill and stream and tree,  
 And morning in the young knight's  
 heart;  
 Only the castle moodily  
 Rebuffed the gifts of the sunshine free,  
 And gloomed by itself apart;  
 The season brimmed all other things up  
 Full as the rain fills the pitcher-plant's cup.

## V

As Sir Launfal made morn through the  
 darksome gate,  
 He was 'ware of a leper, crouched by the  
 same,  
 Who begged with his hand and moaned as  
 he sate;  
 And a loathing over Sir Launfal came;  
 The sunshine went out of his soul with a  
 thrill,  
 The flesh 'neath his armor 'gan shrink  
 and crawl,  
 And midway its leap his heart stood still  
 Like a frozen waterfall;  
 For this man, so foul and bent of stature,  
 Rapped harshly against his dainty nature,  
 And seemed the one blot on the summer  
 morn, —  
 So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

## VI

✓ The leper raised not the gold from the  
 dust:  
 "Better to me the poor man's crust,  
 Better the blessing of the poor,  
 Though I turn me empty from his door;  
 That is no true alms which the hand can  
 hold;  
 He gives only the worthless gold  
 Who gives from a sense of duty;  
 But he who gives but a slender mite,  
 And gives to that which is out of sight,  
 That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty  
 Which runs through all and doth all  
 unite, —  
 The hand cannot clasp the whole of his  
 alms,

The heart outstretches its eager palms,  
For a god goes with it and makes it store  
To the soul that was starving in darkness  
before."

## PRELUDE TO PART SECOND

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,

From the snow five thousand summers old;

On open wold and hilltop bleak

It had gathered all the cold,  
And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's cheek;

It carried a shiver everywhere  
From the unleaved boughs and pastures bare;

The little brook heard it and built a roof  
'Neath which he could house him, winter-proof;

All night by the white stars' frosty gleams  
He groined his arches and matched his beams;

Slender and clear were his crystal spars  
As the lashes of light that trim the stars:  
He sculptured every summer delight  
In his halls and chambers out of sight;  
Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt  
Down through a frost-leaved forest-crypt,  
Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees

Bending to counterfeit a breeze;  
Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew  
But silvery mosses that downward grew;  
Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief  
With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf;  
Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear  
For the gladness of heaven to shine through, and here

He had caught the nodding bulrush-tops  
And hung them thickly with diamond drops,

That crystallised the beams of moon and sun,  
And made a star of every one:  
No mortal builder's most rare device  
Could match this winter-palace of ice;  
'T was as if every image that mirrored lay  
In his depths serene through the summer day,

Each fleeting shadow of earth and sky,  
Lest the happy model should be lost,  
Had been mimicked in fairy masonry  
By the elfin builders of the frost.

Within the hall are song and laughter,  
The cheeks of Christmas glow red and jolly,

And sprouting is every corbel and rafter  
With lightsome green of ivy and holly;  
Through the deep gulf of the chimney wide

Wallows the Yule-log's roaring tide;  
The broad flame-pennons droop and flap  
And belly and tug as a flag in the wind;  
Like a locust shrills the imprisoned sap,  
Hunted to death in its galleries blind;  
And swift little troops of silent sparks,  
Now pausing, now scattering away as in fear,

Go threading the soot-forest's tangled darks  
Like herds of startled deer.

But the wind without was eager and sharp,  
Of Sir Launfal's gray hair it makes a harp,  
And rattles and wrings

The icy strings,  
Singing, in dreary monotone,  
A Christmas carol of its own,  
Whose burden still, as he might guess,  
Was "Shelterless, shelterless, shelterless!"

The voice of the seneschal flared like a torch

As he shouted the wanderer away from the porch,

And he sat in the gateway and saw all night

The great hall-fire, so cheery and bold,  
Through the window-slits of the castle old,

Build out its piers of ruddy light  
Against the drift of the cold.

## PART SECOND

## I

There was never a leaf on bush or tree,  
The bare boughs rattled shudderingly;  
The river was dumb and could not speak,  
For the weaver Winter its shroud had spun;

A single crow on the tree-top bleak  
From his shining feathers shed off the cold sun;

Again it was morning, but shrunk and cold,  
As if her veins were sapless and old,  
And she rose up decrepitably  
For a last dim look at earth and sea.

## II

Sir Launfal turned from his own hard gate,  
 For another heir in his earldom sate;  
 An old, bent man, worn out and frail,  
 He came back from seeking the Holy  
   Grail;  
 Little he recked of his earldom's loss,  
 No more on his surcoat was blazoned the  
   cross,  
 But deep in his soul the sign he wore,  
 The badge of the suffering and the poor.

## III

Sir Launfal's raiment thin and spare  
 Was idle mail 'gainst the barbèd air,  
 For it was just at the Christmas time;  
 So he mused, as he sat, of a sunnier clime,  
 And sought for a shelter from cold and  
   snow  
 In the light and warmth of long-ago;  
 He sees the snake-like caravan crawl  
 O'er the edge of the desert, black and  
   small,  
 Then nearer and nearer, till, one by one,  
 He can count the camels in the sun,  
 As over the red-hot sands they pass  
 To where, in its slender necklace of grass,  
 The little spring laughed and leapt in the  
   shade,  
 And with its own self like an infant played,  
 And waved its signal of palms.

## IV

"For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms;"  
 The happy camels may reach the spring,  
 But Sir Launfal sees only the grewsome  
   thing,  
 The leper, lank as the rain-blanchèd bone,  
 That cowers beside him, a thing as lone  
 And white as the ice-isles of Northern  
   seas  
 In the desolate horror of his disease.

## V

And Sir Launfal said, "I behold in thee  
 An image of Him who died on the tree;  
 Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,  
 Thou also hast had the world's buffets and  
   scorns,  
 And to thy life were not denied  
 The wounds in the hands and feet and  
   side:  
 Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;  
 Behold, through him, I give to thee!"

## VI

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his  
   eyes  
 And looked at Sir Launfal, and straight-  
   way he  
 Remembered in what a haughtier guise  
 He had flung an alms to leprosie,  
 When he girt his young life up in gilded  
   mail  
 And set forth in search of the Holy Grail.  
 The heart within him was ashes and dust;  
 He parted in twain his single crust,  
 He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,  
 And gave the leper to eat and drink,  
 'T was a mouldy crust of coarse brown  
   bread,  
 'T was water out of a wooden bowl,—  
 Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper  
   fed,  
 And 't was red wine he drank with his  
   thirsty soul.

## VII

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast  
   face,  
 A light shone round about the place;  
 The leper no longer crouched at his side,  
 But stood before him glorified,  
 Shining and tall and fair and straight  
 As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful  
   Gate,—  
 Himself the Gate whereby men can  
 Enter the temple of God in Man.

## VIII

His words were shed softer than leaves  
   from the pine,  
 And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on  
   the brine,  
 That mingle their softness and quiet in one  
 With the shaggy unrest they float down  
   upon;  
 And the voice that was softer than silence  
   said,  
 "Lo, it is I, be not afraid!  
 In many climes, without avail,  
 Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;  
 Behold, it is here,—this cup which thou  
 Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now;  
 This crust is my body broken for thee,  
 This water his blood that died on the tree;  
 The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,  
 In whatso we share with another's need;  
 Not what we give, but what we share,



For the gift without the giver is bare;  
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,  
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me."

## IX

Sir Launfal awoke as from a swoond:  
"The Grail in my castle here is found!  
Hang my idle armor up on the wall,  
Let it be the spider's banquet-hall;  
He must be fenced with stronger mail  
Who would seek and find the Holy Grail."

## X

The castle gate stands open now,  
And the wanderer is welcome to the hall  
As the hangbird is to the elm-tree bough;

No longer scowl the turrets tall,  
The Summer's long siege at last is o'er; •  
When the first poor outcast went in at the  
door,

She entered with him in disguise,  
And mastered the fortress by surprise;  
There is no spot she loves so well on  
ground,  
She lingers and smiles there the whole year  
round;

The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land  
Has hall and bower at his command;  
And there's no poor man in the North  
Countrie

But is lord of the earldom as much as he.

## LETTER FROM BOSTON

THIS letter was written to Mr. James Miller  
McKim, who had succeeded Whittier as editor

of *The Pennsylvania Freeman*, where the verses  
were first published.

December, 1846.

DEAR M——

By way of saving time,  
I'll do this letter up in rhyme,  
Whose slim stream through four pages flows  
Ere one is packed with tight-screwed prose,  
Threading the tube of an epistle,  
Smooth as a child's breath through a whistle.

The great attraction now of all  
Is the "Bazaar" at Faneuil Hall,  
Where swarm the anti-slavery folks  
As thick, dear Miller, as your jokes.  
There's GARRISON, his features very  
Benign for an incendiary,  
Beaming forth sunshine through his glasses  
On the surrounding lads and lasses,  
(No bee could blither be, or brisker,) —  
A Pickwick somehow turned John Ziska,  
His bump of firmness swelling up  
Like a rye cupeake from its cup.  
And there, too, was his English tea-set,  
Which in his ear a kind of flea set  
His Uncle Samuel for its beauty  
Demanding sixty dollars duty,  
(T was natural Sam should serve his trunk  
ill,

For G., you know, has cut his uncle,  
Whereas, had he but once made tea in 't,  
His uncle's ear had had the flea in 't,  
There being not a cent of duty  
On any pot that ever drew tea.

There was MARIA CHAPMAN, too,

With her swift eyes of clear steel-blue,  
The coiled-up mainspring of the Fair,  
Originating everywhere  
The expansive force without a sound  
That whirls a hundred wheels around,  
Herself meanwhile as calm and still  
As the bare crown of Prospect Hill;  
A noble woman, brave and apt,  
Cumæan sibyl not more rapt,  
Who might, with those fair tresses shorn,  
The Maid of Orleans' casque have worn,  
Herself the Joan of our Ark,  
For every shaft a shining mark.

And there, too, was ELIZA FOLLEN,  
Who scatters fruit-creating pollen  
Where'er a blossom she can find  
Hardy enough for Truth's north wind,  
Each several point of all her face  
Tremblingly bright with the inward grace,  
As if all motion gave it light  
Like phosphorescent seas at night.

There jokes our EDMUND, plainly son  
Of him who bearded Jefferson,  
A non-resistant by conviction,  
But with a bump in contradiction,  
So that whene'er it gets a chance  
His pen delights to play the lance,  
And — you may doubt it, or believe it —  
Full at the head of Joshua Leavitt  
The very calumet he'd launch,  
And scourge him with the olive branch.  
A master with the foils of wit,

'T is natural he should love a hit;  
 A gentleman, withal, and scholar,  
 Only base things excite his choler,  
 And then his satire's keen and thin  
 As the lithe blade of Saladin.  
 Good letters are a gift apart,  
 And his are gems of Flemish art,  
 True offspring of the fireside Muse,  
 Not a rag-gathering of news  
 Like a new hopfield which is all poles,  
 But of one blood with Horace Walpole's.

There, with one hand behind his back,  
 Stands PHILLIPS buttoned in a sack,  
 Our Attic orator, our Chatham;  
 Old fogies, when he lightens at 'em,  
 Shriveled like leaves; to him 't is granted  
 Always to say the word that 's wanted,  
 So that he seems but speaking clearer  
 The tiptop thought of every hearer;  
 Each flash his brooding heart lets fall  
 Fires what 's combustible in all,  
 And sends the applauses bursting in  
 Like an exploded magazine.  
 His eloquence no frothy show,  
 The gutter's street-polluted flow,  
 No Mississippi's yellow flood  
 Whose shoalness can't be seen for mud; —  
 So simply clear, serenely deep,  
 So silent-strong its graceful sweep,  
 None measures its unrippling force  
 Who has not striven to stem its course;  
 How fare their barques who think to play  
 With smooth Niagara's mane of spray,  
 Let Austin's total shipwreck say.  
 He never spoke a word too much —  
 Except of Story, or some such,  
 Whom, though condemned by ethics strict,  
 The heart refuses to convict.

Beyond, a crater in each eye,  
 Sways brown, broad-shouldered PILLS-  
 BURY,

Who tears up words like trees by the roots,  
 A Theseus in stout cow-hide boots,  
 The wager of eternal war  
 Against that loathsome Minotaur  
 To whom we sacrifice each year  
 The best blood of our Athens here,  
 (Dear M., pray brush up your Lempriere.)  
 A terrible denouncer he,  
 Old Sinai burns unquenchably  
 Upon his lips; he well might be a  
 Hot-blazing soul from fierce Judea,  
 Habakkuk, Ezra, or Hosea.

His words are red hot iron searers,  
 And nightmare-like he mounts his hearers,  
 Spurring them like avenging Fate, or  
 As Waterton his alligator.

Hard by, as calm as summer even,  
 Smiles the reviled and pelted STEPHEN,  
 The unappeasable Boanerges  
 To all the Churches and the Clergies,  
 The grim *savant* who, to complete  
 His own peculiar cabinet,  
 Contrived to label 'mong his kicks  
 One from the followers of Hicks;  
 Who studied mineralogy  
 Not with soft book upon the knee,  
 But learned the properties of stones  
 By contact sharp of flesh and bones,  
 And made the *experimentum crucis*  
 With his own body's vital juices;  
 A man with caoutchouc endurance,  
 A perfect gem for life insurance,  
 A kind of maddened John the Baptist,  
 To whom the harshest word comes aptest,  
 Who, struck by stone or brick ill-starred,  
 Hurls back an epithet as hard,  
 Which, deadlier than stone or brick,  
 Has a propensity to stick.  
 His oratory is like the scream  
 Of the iron-horse's frenzied steam  
 Which warns the world to leave wide space  
 For the black engine's swerveless race.  
 Ye men with neckcloths white, I warn  
 you —

*Habet a whole haymow in cornu.*

A Judith, there, turned Quakeress,  
 Sits ABBY in her modest dress,  
 Serving a table quietly,  
 As if that mild and downcast eye  
 Flashed never, with its scorn intense,  
 More than Medea's eloquence.  
 So the same force which shakes its dread  
 Far-blazing blocks o'er *Ætna's* head,  
 Along the wires in silence fares  
 And messages of commerce bears.  
 No nobler gift of heart and brain,  
 No life more white from spot or stain,  
 Was e'er on Freedom's altar laid  
 Than hers, the simple Quaker maid.

These last three (leaving in the lurch  
 Some other themes) assault the Church,  
 Who therefore writes them in her lists  
 As Satan's limbs and atheists;  
 For each sect has one argument

Whereby the rest to hell are sent,  
Which serve them like the Graia's tooth,  
Passed round in turn from mouth to  
mouth;—

If any *ism* should arise,  
Then look on it with constable's eyes,  
Tie round its neck a heavy *athe-*,  
And give it kittens' hydropathy.  
This trick with other (useful very) tricks  
Is laid to the Babylonian *meretrix*,  
But 't was in vogue before her day  
Wherever priesthoods had their way,  
And Buddha's Popes with this struck dumb  
The followers of Fi and Fum.

Well, if the world, with prudent fear  
Pay God a seventh of the year,  
And as a Farmer, who would pack  
All his religion in one stack,  
For this world works six days in seven  
And idles on the seventh for Heaven,  
Expecting, for his Sunday's sowing,  
In the next world to go a-mowing  
The crop of all his meeting-going;—  
If the poor Church, by power enticed,  
Finds none so infidel as Christ,

Quite backward reads his Gospel meek,  
(As 't were in Hebrew writ, not Greek,)   
Fencing the gallows and the sword  
With conscripts drafted from his word,  
And makes one gate of Heaven so wide  
That the rich orthodox might ride  
Through on their camels, while the poor  
Squirm through the scant, unyielding door,  
Which, of the Gospel's straitest size,  
Is narrower than bead-needles' eyes,  
What wonder World and Church should  
call

The true faith atheistical?

Yet, after all, 'twixt you and me,  
Dear Miller, I could never see  
That Sin's and Error's ugly smirch  
Stained the walls only of the Church;  
There are good priests, and men who take  
Freedom's torn cloak for lucre's sake;  
I can't believe the Church so strong,  
As some men do, for Right or Wrong.  
But, for this subject (long and vext)  
I must refer you to my next,  
As also for a list exact  
Of goods with which the Hall was packed.

## A FABLE FOR CRITICS

In a Prefatory Note which Mr. Lowell prefixed to a later issue of this poem, the history of its inception and publication is thus briefly told: "This *jeu d'esprit* was extemporized, I may fairly say, so rapidly was it written, purely for my own amusement and with no thought of publication. I sent daily instalments of it to a friend in New York, the late Charles F. Briggs. He urged me to let it be printed, and I at last consented to its anonymous publication. The secret was kept till after several persons had laid claim to its authorship." In the *Letters* it is possible to get a closer view of the author at work. In a letter to Mr. Briggs, written November 13, 1847, he says: "My satire remains just as it was. About six hundred lines I think are written. I left it because I wished to finish it in one mood of mind, and not to get that and my serious poems in the new volume entangled. It is a rambling, disjointed affair, and I may alter the form of it, but if I can get it read, I know it will take. I intend to give it some serial title and continue it at intervals." On the last day of the same year, he writes to his

correspondent: "I have been hard at work copying my satire, that I might get it (what was finished of it, at least) to you by New-Year's Day as a present. As it is, I can only send the first part. It was all written with one impulse and was the work of not a great many hours, but it was written in good spirits (*con amore*, as Leupp said he used to smoke), and therefore seems to me to have a hearty and easy swing about it that is pleasant. But I was interrupted midway by being obliged to get ready the copy for my volume, and I have never been able to weld my present mood upon the old one without making an ugly swelling at the joint.

"I wish you to understand that I make you a New Year's gift, not of the manuscript, but of the thing itself. I wish you to get it printed (if you think the sale will warrant it) for your own benefit. At the same time I am desirous of retaining my copyright, in order that, if circumstances render it desirable, I may still possess a control over it. Therefore, if you think it would repay publishing (*I have no doubt of it, or I should not offer it to you*) I wish you

would enter the copyright in your own name, and then make a transfer to me in 'consideration of,' etc.

"I am making as particular directions as if I were drawing my will, but I have a sort of presentiment (which I never had in regard to anything else) that this little bit of pleasantry will take. Perhaps I have said too much of the Centurion. But it was only the comicality of his *character* that attracted me — for the man himself personally never entered my head. But the sketch is clever?"

Again under date of March 26, 1848: "Since I sent you the first half, I have written something about Willis and about Longfellow — and I am waiting for pleasanter weather in order to finish it. I want to get my windows open and to write in the fresh air. I ought not to have sent you any part of it till I had finished it entirely. I feel a sense of responsibility which hinders my pen from running along as it ought in such a theme. I wish the last half to be as jolly and unconstrained as the first. If you had not praised what I sent you, I dare say you would have had the whole of it ere this. Praise is the only thing that can make me feel any doubt of myself." Six

weeks later he wrote, May 12: "When I can sit at my open window and my friendly leaves hold their hands before my eyes to prevent their wandering to the landscape, I can sit down and write. I have begun upon the *Fable* again fairly, and am making some headway. I think with what I sent you (which I believe was about five hundred lines) it will make something over a thousand. I have done, since I sent the first half, Willis, Longfellow, Bryant, Miss Fuller, and Mrs. Child. In Longfellow's case I have attempted no characterization. The same (in a degree) may be said of S. M. F. With her I have been perfectly good-humored, but I have a fancy that what I say will stick uncomfortably. It will make you laugh. So will L. M. C. After S. M. F. I make a short digression on bores in general, which has some drollery. Willis I think good. Bryant is funny, and as fair as I could make it, immitigably just. Indeed I have endeavored to be so in all."

The volume was affectionately inscribed to Charles F. Briggs, and furnished with the following rhymed title page and preliminary note, a second note being prefixed to a second edition.

*Reader! walk up at once (it will soon be too late),  
and buy at a perfectly ruinous rate*

## A FABLE FOR CRITICS:

OR, BETTER,

(I LIKE, AS A THING THAT THE READER'S FIRST FANCY MAY STRIKE, AN OLD-FASHIONED TITLE-PAGE, SUCH AS PRESENTS A TABULAR VIEW OF THE VOLUME'S CONTENTS),

## A GLANCE AT A FEW OF OUR LITERARY PROGENIES

(MRS. MALAPROP'S WORD)

FROM THE TUB OF DIOGENES;

A VOCAL AND MUSICAL MEDLEY,

THAT IS,

A SERIES OF JOKES

By A Wonderful Quiz,

WHO ACCOMPANIES HIMSELF WITH A RUB-A-DUB-DUB, FULL OF SPIRIT AND GRACE, ON THE TOP OF THE TUB.

*Set forth in October, the 31st day,  
In the year '48, G. P. Putnam, Broadway.*

It being the commonest mode of procedure, I premise a few candid remarks

TO THE READER:—

This trifle, begun to please only myself and my own private fancy, was laid on the shelf. But some friends, who had seen it, induced me, by dint of saying they liked it, to put it in print. That is, having come to that very conclusion, I asked their advice when 't would make no confusion. For though (in the gentlest of ways) they had hinted it was scarce worth the while, I should doubtless have printed it.

I began it, intending a Fable, a frail, slender thing, rhyme-ywined, with a sting in its tail. But, by addings and alterings not previously planned, digressions chance-hatched, like birds' eggs in the sand, and dawdlings to suit every whimsey's demand (always freeing the bird which I held in my hand, for the two perched, perhaps out of reach, in the tree), — it grew by degrees to the size which you see. I was like the old woman that carried the calf, and my neighbors, like hers, no doubt, wonder and laugh; and when, my strained arms with their grown burthen full, I call it my Fable, they call it a bull.



Having scrawled at full gallop (as far as that goes) in a style that is neither good verse nor bad prose, and being a person whom nobody knows, some people will say I am rather more free with my readers than it is becoming to be, that I seem to expect them to wait on my leisure in following wherever I wander at pleasure, that, in short, I take more than a young author's lawful ease, and laugh in a queer way so like Mephistopheles, that the Public will doubt, as they grope through my rhythm, if in truth I am making fun of them or *with* them.

So the excellent Public is hereby assured that the sale of my book is already secured. For there is not a poet throughout the whole land but will purchase a copy or two out of hand, in the fond expectation of being amused in it, by seeing his betters cut up and abused in it. Now, I find, by a pretty exact calculation, there are something like ten thousand bards in the nation, of that special variety whom the Review and Magazine critics call *lofty* and *true*, and about thirty thousand (*this* tribe is increasing) of the kinds who are termed *full of promise* and *pleasing*. The Public will see by a glance at this schedule, that they cannot expect me to be over-sedulous about courting *them*, since it seems I have got enough fuel made sure of for boiling my pot.

As for such of our poets as find not their names mentioned once in my pages, with praises or blames, let them SEND IN THEIR CARDS, without further DELAY, to my friend G. P. PUTNAM, Esquire, in Broadway, where a LIST will be kept with the strictest regard to the day and the hour of receiving the card. Then, taking them up as I chance to have time (that is, if their names can be twisted in rhyme), I will honestly give each his PROPER POSITION, at the rate of ONE AUTHOR to each NEW EDITION. Thus a PREMIUM is offered sufficiently HIGH (as the magazines say when they tell their best lie) to induce bards to CLUB their resources and buy the balance of every edition, until they have all of them fairly been run through the mill.

One word to such readers (judicious and wise) as read books with something behind the mere eyes, of whom in the country, perhaps, there are two, including myself,

gentle reader, and you. All the characters sketched in this slight *jeu d'esprit*, though, it may be, they seem, here and there, rather free, and drawn from a somewhat too cynical standpoint, are *meant* to be faithful, for that is the grand point, and none but an owl would feel sore at a rub from a jester who tells you, without any subterfuge, that he sits in Diogenes' tub.

#### A PRELIMINARY NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION,

though it well may be reckoned, of all composition, the species at once most delightful and healthy, is a thing which an author, unless he be wealthy and willing to pay for that kind of delight, is not, in all instances, called on to write, though there are, it is said, who, their spirits to cheer, slip in a new title-page three times a year, and in this way snuff up an imaginary savor of that sweetest of dishes, the popular favor, — much as if a starved painter should fall to and treat the Ugolino inside to a picture of meat.

You remember (if not, pray turn backward and look) that, in writing the preface which ushered my book, I treated you, excellent Public, not merely with a cool disregard, but downright cavalierly. Now I would not take back the least thing I then said, though I thereby could butter both sides of my bread, for I never could see that an author owed ought to the people he solaced, diverted, or taught; and, as for mere fame, I have long ago learned that the persons by whom it is finally earned are those with whom *your* verdict weighed not a pin, unsustained by the higher court sitting within.

But I wander from what I intended to say, — that you have, namely, shown such a liberal way of thinking, and so much æsthetic perception of anonymous worth in the handsome reception you gave to my book, spite of some private piques (having bought the first thousand in barely two weeks), that I think, past a doubt, if you measured the phiz of yours most devotedly, Wonderful Quiz, you would find that its vertical section was shorter, by an inch and two tenths, or 'twixt that and a quarter.

You have watched a child playing — in

those wondrous years when belief is not bound to the eyes and the ears, and the vision divine is so clear and unmarred, that each baker of pies in the dirt is a bard? Give a knife and a shingle, he fits out a fleet, and, on that little mud-puddle over the street, his fancy, in purest good faith, will make sail round the globe with a puff of his breath for a gale, will visit, in barely ten minutes, all climes, and do the Columbus-feat hundreds of times. Or, suppose the young poet fresh stored with delights from that Bible of childhood, the Arabian Nights, he will turn to a crony and cry, "Jack, let's play that I am a Genius!" Jacky straightway makes Aladdin's lamp out of a stone, and, for hours, they enjoy each his own supernatural powers. This is all very pretty and pleasant, but then suppose our two urchins have grown into men, and both have turned authors, — one says to his brother, "Let's play we're the American somethings or other, — say Homer or Sophocles, Goethe or Scott (only let them be big enough, no matter what). Come, you shall be Byron or Pope, which you choose: I'll be Coleridge, and both shall write mutual reviews." So they both (as mere strangers) before many days send each other a cord of anonymous bays. Each, piling his epithets, smiles in his sleeve to see what his friend can be made to believe; each, reading the other's unbiassed review, thinks — Here's pretty high praise, but no more than my due. Well, we laugh at them both, and yet make no great fuss when the same farce is acted to benefit us. Even I, who, if asked, scarce a month since, what Fudge meant, should have answered, the dear Public's critical judgment, begin to think sharp-witted Horace spoke sooth when he said that the Public *sometimes* hit the truth.

In reading these lines, you perhaps have a vision of a person in pretty good health and condition; and yet, since I put forth my primary edition, I have been crushed, scorched, withered, used up and put down (by Smith with the cordial assistance of Brown), in all, if you put any faith in my rhymes, to the number of ninety-five several times, and, while I am writing, — I tremble to think of it, for I may at this moment be just on the brink of it, — Molybdostom,

angry at being omitted, has begun a critique, — am I not to be pitted?<sup>1</sup>

Now I shall not crush *them* since, indeed, for that matter, no pressure I know of could render them flatter; nor wither, nor scorch them, — no action of fire could make either them or their articles drier; nor waste time in putting them down — I am thinking not their own self-inflation will keep them from sinking; for there's this contradiction about the whole bevy, — though without the least weight, they are awfully heavy. No, my dear honest bore, *surdo fabulam narras*, they are no more to me than a rat in the arras. I can walk with the Doctor, get facts from the Don, or draw out the Lambish quintessence of John, and feel nothing more than a half-comic sorrow, to think that they all will be lying to-morrow tossed carelessly up on the waste-paper shelves, and forgotten by all but their half-dozen selves. Once snug in my attic, my fire in a roar, I leave the whole pack of them outside the door. With Hakluyt or Purchas I wander away to the black northern seas or barbaric Cathay; get *fou* with O'Shanter, and sober me then with that builder of brick-kilnish dramas, rare Ben; snuff Herbert, as holy as a flower on a grave; with Fletcher wax tender, o'er Chapman grow brave; with Marlowe or Kyd take a fine poet-rave; in Very, most Hebrew of Saxons, find peace; with Lycidas welter on vexed Irish seas; with Webster grow wild, and climb earthward again, down by mystical Browne's Jacob's-ladder-like brain, to that spiritual Pepys (Cotton's version) Montaigne; find a new depth in Wordsworth, undreamed of before, that marvel, a poet divine who can bore. Or, out of my study, the scholar thrown off, Nature holds up her shield 'gainst the sneer and the scoff; the landscape, forever consoling and kind, pours her wine and her oil on the smarts of the mind. The waterfall, scattering its vanishing gems; the tall grove of hemlocks, with moss on their stems, like splashes of sunlight; the pond in the woods, where no foot but mine and the bittern's intrudes, where pitcher-plants purple and gentians

<sup>1</sup> The wise Scandinavians probably called their bards by the queer-looking title of Scald in a delicate way, as it were, just to hint to the world the hot water they always get into.

hard by recall to September the blue of June's sky; these are all my kind neighbors, and leave me no wish to say aught to you all, my poor critics, but — pish! I've buried the hatchet: I'm twisting an allumette out of one of you now, and relighting my calumet. In your private capacities, come when you please, I will give you my hand and a fresh pipe apiece.

As I ran through the leaves of my poor little book, to take a fond author's first tremulous look, it was quite an excitement to hunt the *errata*, sprawled in as birds' tracks are in some kinds of strata (only these made things crooked). Fancy an heir that a father had seen born well-featured and fair, turning suddenly wry-nosed, club-footed, squint-eyed, hair-lipped, wapper-jawed, carrot-haired, from a pride become an aversion, — my case was yet worse. A club-foot (by way of a change) in a verse, I might have forgiven, an *o's* being wry, a limp in an *e*, or a cock in an *i*, — but to have the sweet babe of my brain served in *pi*! I am not queasy-stomached, but such a Thyestean banquet as that was quite out of the question.

In the edition now issued no pains are neglected, and my verses, as orators say, stand corrected. Yet some blunders remain of the Public's own make, which I wish to correct for my personal sake. For instance, a character drawn in pure fun and condensing the traits of a dozen in one, has been, as I hear, by some persons applied to a good friend of mine, whom to stab in the side, as we walked along chatting and joking together, would not be *my* way. I can hardly tell whether a question will ever arise in which he and I should by any strange fortune agree, but meanwhile my esteem for him grows as I know him, and, though not the best judge on earth of a poem, he knows what it is he is saying and why, and is honest and fearless, two good points which I have not found so rife I can easily smother my love for them, whether on my side or t' other.

For my other *anonymi*, you may be sure that I know what is meant by a caricature, and what by a portrait. There are those who think it is capital fun to be spattering their ink on quiet, unquarrelsome folk, but the minute the game changes sides and the others begin it, they see something savage

and horrible in it. As for me I respect neither women nor men for their gender, nor own any sex in a pen. I choose just to hint to some causeless unfriends that, as far as I know, there are always two ends (and one of them heaviest, too) to a staff, and two parties also to every good laugh.

## A FABLE FOR CRITICS

PHÆBUS, sitting one day in a laurel-tree's shade,  
Was reminded of Daphne, of whom it was made,  
For the god being one day too warm in his wooing,  
She took to the tree to escape his pursuing;  
Be the cause what it might, from his offers she shrunk,  
And, Ginevra-like, shut herself up in a trunk;  
And, though 't was a step into which he had driven her,  
He somehow or other had never forgiven her;  
Her memory he nursed as a kind of a tonic,  
Something bitter to chew when he'd play the Byronic,  
And I can't count the obstinate nymphs that he brought over  
By a strange kind of smile he put on when he thought of her.  
"My case is like Dido's," he sometimes remarked;  
"When I last saw my love, she was fairly embarked  
In a laurel, as *she* thought — but (ah, how Fate mocks!)  
She has found it by this time a very bad box;  
Let hunters from me take this saw when they need it, —  
You're not always sure of your game when you've treed it.  
Just conceive such a change taking place in one's mistress!  
What romance would be left? — who can flatter or kiss trees?  
And, for mercy's sake, how could one keep up a dialogue  
With a dull wooden thing that will live and will die a log, —  
Not to say that the thought would forever intrude

That you've less chance to win her the  
more she is wood?  
Ah! it went to my heart, and the memory  
still grieves,  
To see those loved graces all taking their  
leaves;  
Those charms beyond speech, so enchanting  
but now,  
As they left me forever, each making its  
bough!  
If her tongue *had* a tang sometimes more  
than was right,  
Her new bark is worse than ten times her  
old bite."

Now, Daphne — before she was happily  
treeified —  
Over all other blossoms the lily had deified,  
And when she expected the god on a visit  
(*'T* was before he had made his intentions  
explicit),  
Some buds, she arranged with a vast deal  
of care,  
To look as if artlessly twined in her hair,  
Where they seemed, as he said, when he  
paid his addresses,  
Like the day breaking through the long  
night of her tresses;  
So whenever he wished to be quite irresistible,  
Like a man with eight trumps in his hand  
at a whist-table  
(I feared me at first that the rhyme was  
untwistable,  
Though I might have lugged in an allusion  
to *Cristabel*), —  
He would take up a lily, and gloomily look  
in it,  
As I shall at the —, when they cut up  
my book in it.

Well, here, after all the bad rhyme I've  
been spinning,  
I've got back at last to my story's begin-  
ning:  
Sitting there, as I say, in the shade of his  
mistress,  
As dull as a volume of old Chester myster-  
ies,  
Or as those puzzling specimens which, in  
old histories,  
We read of his verses — the Oracles,  
namely, —  
(I wonder the Greeks should have swal-  
lowed them tamely,

For one might bet safely whatever he has  
to risk,  
They were laid at his door by some ancient  
Miss Asterisk,  
And so dull that the men who retailed  
them out-doors  
Got the ill name of augurs, because they  
were bores, —)  
First, he mused what the animal substance  
or herb is  
Would induce a mustache, for you know  
he's *imberbis*;  
Then he shuddered to think how his youth-  
ful position  
Was assailed by the age of his son the  
physician;  
At some poems he glanced, had been sent  
to him lately,  
And the metre and sentiment puzzled him  
greatly;  
"Mehercle! I'd make such proceeding  
felonious, —  
Have they all of them slept in the cave of  
*Trophonius*?  
Look well to your seat, 't is like taking an  
airing  
On a corduroy road, and that out of repair-  
ing;  
It leads one, 't is true, through the primi-  
tive forest,  
Grand natural features, but then one has  
no rest;  
You just catch a glimpse of some ravish-  
ing distance,  
When a jolt puts the whole of it out of ex-  
istence, —  
Why not use their ears, if they happen to  
have any?"  
— Here the laurel-leaves murmured the  
name of poor Daphne.

"Oh, weep with me, Daphne," he sighed,  
"for you know it's  
A terrible thing to be pestered with po-  
ets!  
But, alas, she is dumb, and the proverb  
holds good,  
She never will cry till she's out of the  
wood!  
What would n't I give if I never had  
known of her?  
'T were a kind of relief had I something  
to groan over:  
If I had but some letters of hers, now, to  
toss over,



I might turn for the nonce a Byronic philosopher,  
 And bewitch all the flats by bemoaning the loss of her.  
 One needs something tangible, though, to begin on, —  
 A loom, as it were, for the fancy to spin on;  
 What boots all your grist? it can never be ground  
 Till a breeze makes the arms of the wind-mill go round;  
 (Or, if 't is a water-mill, alter the metaphor,  
 And say it won't stir, save the wheel be well wet afore,  
 Or lug in some stuff about water 'so dreamily,' —  
 It is not a metaphor, though, 't is a simile);  
 A lily, perhaps, would set *my* mill a-going,  
 For just at this season, I think, they are blowing.  
 Here, somebody, fetch one; not very far hence  
 They 're in bloom by the score, 't is but climbing a fence;  
 There 's a poet hard by, who does nothing but fill his  
 Whole garden, from one end to t' other, with lilies;  
 A very good plan, were it not for satiety,  
 One longs for a weed here and there, for variety;  
 Though a weed is no more than a flower in disguise,  
 Which is seen through at once, if love give a man eyes."

Now there happened to be among Phœbus's followers,  
 A gentleman, one of the omnivorous swallows,  
 Who bolt every book that comes out of the press,  
 Without the least question of larger or less,  
 Whose stomachs are strong at the expense of their head, —  
 For reading new books is like eating new bread,  
 One can bear it at first, but by gradual steps he  
 Is brought to death's door of a mental dyspepsy.

On a previous stage of existence, our Hero  
 Had ridden outside, with the glass below zero;  
 He had been, 't is a fact you may safely rely on,  
 Of a very old stock a most eminent scion, —  
 A stock all fresh quacks their fierce boluses ply on,  
 Who stretch the new boots Earth's unwilling to try on,  
 Whom humbugs of all shapes and sorts keep their eye on,  
 Whose hair 's in the mortar of every new Zion,  
 Who, when whistles are dear, go directly and buy one,  
 Who think slavery a crime that we must not say fie on,  
 Who hunt, if they e'er hunt at all, with the lion  
 (Though they hunt lions also, whenever they spy one),  
 Who contrive to make every good fortune a wry one,  
 And at last choose the hard bed of honor to die on,  
 Whose pedigree, traced to earth's earliest years,  
 Is longer than anything else but their ears; —  
 In short, he was sent into life with the wrong key,  
 He unlocked the door, and stept forth a poor donkey.  
 Though kicked and abused by his bipedal betters  
 Yet he filled no mean place in the kingdom of letters;  
 Far happier than many a literary hack,  
 He bore only paper-mill rags on his back  
 (For it makes a vast difference which side the mill  
 One expends on the paper his labor and skill);  
 So, when his soul waited a new transmigration,  
 And Destiny balanced 'twixt this and that station,  
 Not having much time to expend upon bothers,  
 Remembering he 'd had some connection with authors,

And considering his four legs had grown  
paralytic, —  
She set him on two, and he came forth a  
critic.

Through his babyhood no kind of pleas-  
ure he took  
In any amusement but tearing a book;  
For him there was no intermediate stage  
From babyhood up to straight-laced mid-  
dle age;  
There were years when he did n't wear  
coat-tails behind,  
But a boy he could never be rightly de-  
fined;  
Like the Irish Good Folk, though in length  
scarce a span,  
From the womb he came gravely, a little  
old man;  
While other boys' trousers demanded the  
toil  
Of the motherly fingers on all kinds of  
soil,  
Red, yellow, brown, black, clayey, gravelly,  
loamy,  
He sat in the corner and read *Viri Romæ*.  
He never was known to unbend or to revel  
once  
In base, marbles, hockey, or kick up the  
devil once;  
He was just one of those who excite the  
benevolence  
Of your old prigs who sound the soul's  
depths with a ledger,  
And are on the lookout for some young  
men to "edger-  
cate," as they call it, who won't be too  
costly,  
And who 'll afterward take to the ministry  
mostly;  
Who always wear spectacles, always look  
bilious,  
Always keep on good terms with each  
*mater-familias*  
Throughout the whole parish, and manage  
to rear  
Ten boys like themselves, on four hundred  
a year:  
Who, fulfilling in turn the same fearful  
conditions,  
Either preach through their noses, or go  
upon missions.

In this way our Hero got safely to col-  
lege,

Where he bolted alike both his commons  
and knowledge;  
A reading-machine, always wound up and  
going,  
He mastered whatever was not worth the  
knowing,  
Appeared in a gown, with black waistcoat  
of satin,  
To spout such a Gothic oration in Latin  
That Tully could never have made out a  
word in it  
(Though himself was the model the author  
preferred in it),  
And grasping the parchment which gave  
him in fee  
All the mystic and-so-forths contained in  
A. B.,  
He was launched (life is always compared  
to a sea)  
With just enough learning, and skill for  
the using it,  
To prove he 'd a brain, by forever confus-  
ing it.  
So worthy St. Benedict, piously burning  
With the holiest zeal against secular learn-  
ing,  
*Nesciensque scienter*, as writers express it,  
*Indoctusque sapienter a Roma recessit*.

'T would be endless to tell you the  
things that he knew,  
Each a separate fact, undeniably true,  
But with him or each other they 'd nothing  
to do;  
No power of combining, arranging, dis-  
cerning,  
Digested the masses he learned into learn-  
ing;  
There was one thing in life he had practical  
knowledge for  
(And this, you will think, he need scarce  
go to college for), —  
Not a deed would he do, nor a word would  
he utter,  
Till he 'd weighed its relations to plain  
bread and butter.  
When he left Alma Mater, he practised his  
wits  
In compiling the journals' historical bits, —  
Of shops broken open, men falling in  
fits,  
Great fortunes in England bequeathed to  
poor printers,  
And cold spells, the coldest for many past  
winters, —

Then, rising by industry, knack, and address,  
 Got notices up for an unbiased press,  
 With a mind so well poised, it seemed  
 equally made for  
 Applause or abuse, just which chanced to  
 be paid for:  
 From this point his progress was rapid and  
 sure,  
 To the post of a regular heavy reviewer.

And here I must say he wrote excellent  
 articles  
 On Hebraical points, or the force of Greek  
 particles;  
 They filled up the space nothing else was  
 prepared for,  
 And nobody read that which nobody cared  
 for;  
 If any old book reached a fiftieth edition,  
 He could fill forty pages with safe erudi-  
 tion:  
 He could gauge the old books by the old  
 set of rules,  
 And his very old nothings pleased very old  
 fools;  
 But give him a new book, fresh out of the  
 heart,  
 And you put him at sea without compass  
 or chart, —  
 His blunders aspired to the rank of an art;  
 For his lore was engraft, something foreign  
 that grew in him,  
 Exhausting the sap of the native and true  
 in him,  
 So that when a man came with a soul that  
 was new in him,  
 Carving new forms of truth out of Nature's  
 old granite,  
 New and old at their birth, like Le Ver-  
 rier's planet,  
 Which, to get a true judgment, themselves  
 must create  
 In the soul of their critic the measure and  
 weight,  
 Being rather themselves a fresh standard  
 of grace,  
 To compute their own judge, and assign  
 him his place,  
 Our reviewer would crawl all about it and  
 round it,  
 And, reporting each circumstance just as  
 he found it,  
 Without the least malice, — his record  
 would be

Profoundly æsthetic as that of a flea,  
 Which, supping on Wordsworth, should  
 print, for our sakes,  
 Recollections of nights with the Bard of  
 the Lakes,  
 Or, lodged by an Arab guide, ventured to  
 render a  
 Comprehensive account of the ruins at  
 Denderah.

As I said, he was never precisely unkind,  
 The defect in his brain was just absence of  
 mind;  
 If he boasted, 't was simply that he was  
 self-made,  
 A position which I, for one, never gain-  
 said,  
 My respect for my Maker supposing a skill  
 In his works which our Hero would an-  
 swer but ill;  
 And I trust that the mould which he used  
 may be cracked, or he,  
 Made bold by success, may enlarge his  
 phylactery,  
 And set up a kind of a man-manufactory, —  
 An event which I shudder to think about,  
 seeing  
 That Man is a moral, accountable being.

He meant well enough, but was still in  
 the way,  
 As dunces still are, let them be where they  
 may;  
 Indeed, they appear to come into exist-  
 ence  
 To impede other folks with their awkward  
 assistance;  
 If you set up a dunce on the very North  
 pole  
 All alone with himself, I believe, on my  
 soul,  
 He 'd manage to get betwixt somebody's  
 shins,  
 And pitch him down bodily, all in his sins,  
 To the grave polar bears sitting round on  
 the ice,  
 All shortening their grace, to be in for a  
 slice;  
 Or, if he found nobody else there to pother,  
 Why, one of his legs would just trip up the  
 other,  
 For there 's nothing we read of in torture's  
 inventions,  
 Like a well-meaning dunce, with the best  
 of intentions.

A terrible fellow to meet in society,  
 Not the toast that he buttered was ever so  
 dry at tea;  
 There he'd sit at the table and stir in his  
 sugar,  
 Crouching close for a spring, all the while,  
 like a cougar;  
 Be sure of your facts, of your measures  
 and weights,  
 Of your time, — he's as fond as an Arab of  
 dates;  
 You'll be telling, perhaps, in your comical  
 way,  
 Of something you've seen in the course of  
 the day;  
 And, just as you're tapering out the con-  
 clusion,  
 You venture an ill-fated classic allusion, —  
 The girls have all got their laughs ready,  
 when, whack !  
 The cougar comes down on your thunder-  
 struck back !  
 You had left out a comma, — your Greek's  
 put in joint,  
 And pointed at cost of your story's whole  
 point.  
 In the course of the evening, you find  
 chance for certain  
 Soft speeches to Anne, in the shade of the  
 curtain:  
 You tell her your heart can be likened to  
*one* flower,  
 "And that, O most charming of women,'s  
 the sunflower,  
 Which turns" — here a clear nasal voice,  
 to your terror,  
 From outside the curtain, says, "That's all  
 an error."  
 As for him, he's — no matter, he never  
 grew tender,  
 Sitting after a ball, with his feet on the  
 fender,  
 Shaping somebody's sweet features out of  
 cigar smoke  
 (Though he'd willingly grant you that  
 such doings are smoke);  
 All women he damns with *mutabile semper*,  
 And if ever he felt something like love's  
 distemper,  
 'T was tow'rds a young lady who spoke  
 ancient Mexican,  
 And assisted her father in making a lexi-  
 con;  
 Though I recollect hearing him get quite  
 ferocious

About Mary Clausum, the mistress of Gro-  
 tius,  
 Or something of that sort, — but, no more  
 to bore ye  
 With character-painting, I'll turn to my  
 story.

Now, Apollo, who finds it convenient  
 sometimes  
 To get his court clear of the makers of  
 rhymes,  
 The *genus*, I think it is called, *irritabile*,  
 Every one of whom thinks himself treated  
 most shabbily,  
 And nurses a — what is it ? — *immedicabile*,  
 Which keeps him at boiling-point, hot for a  
 quarrel,  
 As bitter as wormwood, and sourer than  
 sorrel,  
 If any poor devil but look at a laurel; —  
 Apollo, I say, being sick of their rioting  
 (Though he sometimes acknowledged their  
 verse had a quieting  
 Effect after dinner, and seemed to sug-  
 gest a  
 Retreat to the shrine of a tranquil siesta),  
 Kept our Hero at hand, who, by means of  
 a bray,  
 Which he gave to the life, drove the rabble  
 away;  
 And if that would n't do, he was sure to  
 succeed,  
 If he took his review out and offered to  
 read;  
 Or, failing in plans of this milder descrip-  
 tion,  
 He would ask for their aid to get up a  
 subscription,  
 Considering that authorship was n't a rich  
 craft,  
 To print the "American drama of Witch-  
 craft."  
 "Stay, I'll read you a scene," — but he  
 hardly began,  
 Ere Apollo shrieked "Help!" and the  
 authors all ran:  
 And once, when these purgatives acted  
 with less spirit,  
 And the desperate case asked a remedy  
 desperate,  
 He drew from his pocket a foolscap epistle  
 As calmly as if 't were a nine-barrelled  
 pistol,  
 And threatened them all with the judg-  
 ment to come,



Of "A wandering Star's first impressions  
of Rome."  
"Stop! stop!" with their hands o'er their  
ears, screamed the Muses,  
"He may go off and murder himself, if he  
chooses,  
'T was a means self-defence only sanctioned  
his trying,  
'T is mere massacre now that the enemy 's  
flying;  
If he 's forced to 't again, and we happen  
to be there,  
Give us each a large handkerchief soaked  
in strong ether."

I called this a "Fable for Critics ;"  
you think it 's  
More like a display of my rhythmical  
trinkets;  
My plot, like an icicle, 's slender and slip-  
pery,  
Every moment more slender, and likely  
to slip awry,  
And the reader unwilling *in loco desipere*  
Is free to jump over as much of my frip-  
pery  
As he fancies, and, if he 's a provident  
skipper, he  
May have like Odysseus control of the  
gales,  
And get safe to port, ere his patience quite  
fails;  
Moreover, although 't is a slender return  
For your toil and expense, yet my paper  
will burn,  
And, if you have manfully struggled thus  
far with me,  
You may e'en twist me up, and just light  
your cigar with me:  
If too angry for that, you can tear me in  
pieces,  
And my *membra disjecta* consign to the  
breezes,  
A fate like great Ratzau's, whom one of  
those bores,  
Who befleaded with bad verses poor Louis  
Quatorze,  
Describes (the first verse somehow ends  
with *victoire*),  
As *dispersant partout et ses membres et sa*  
*gloire*;  
Or, if I were over-desirous of earning  
A repute among noodles for classical learn-  
ing,  
I could pick you a score of allusions, i-wis,

As new as the jests of *Didaskalos tis* ;  
Better still, I could make out a good solid  
list  
From authors recondite who do not exist, —  
But that would be naughty: at least, I  
could twist  
Something out of Absyrtus, or turn your  
inquiries  
After Milton's prose metaphor, drawn from  
Osiris;  
But, as Cicero says he won't say this or that  
(A fetch, I must say, most transparent and  
flat),  
After saying whate'er he could possibly  
think of, —  
I simply will state that I pause on the  
brink of  
A mire, ankle-deep, of deliberate confusion,  
Made up of old jumbles of classic allusion:  
So, when you were thinking yourselves to  
be pitied,  
Just conceive how much harder your teeth  
you 'd have gritted,  
An 't were not for the dulness I 've kindly  
omitted.

I 'd apologize here for my many digres-  
sions,  
Were it not that I 'm certain to trip into  
fresh ones  
( 'T is so hard to escape if you get in their  
mesh once);  
Just reflect, if you please, how 't is said by  
Horatius,  
That Mæonides nods now and then, and,  
my gracious !  
It certainly does look a little bit ominous  
When he gets under way with *ton d'*  
*apameibomenos*.  
(Here a something occurs which I 'll just  
clap a rhyme to,  
And say it myself, ere a Zoilus have time  
to, —  
Any author a nap like Van Winkle's may  
take,  
If he only contrive to keep readers awake,  
But he 'll very soon find himself laid on  
the shelf,  
If *they* fall a-nodding when he nods him-  
self.)

Once for all, to return, and to stay, will  
I, nill I —  
When Phœbus expressed his desire for a  
lily,

Our Hero, whose homœopathic sagacity  
 With an ocean of zeal mixed his drop of  
   capacity,  
 Set off for the garden as fast as the wind  
 (Or, to take a comparison more to my  
   mind,  
 As a sound politician leaves conscience be-  
   hind),  
 And leaped the low fence, as a party hack  
   jumps  
 O'er his principles, when something else  
   turns up trumps.

He was gone a long time, and Apollo,  
   meanwhile,  
 Went over some sonnets of his with a file,  
 For, of all compositions, he thought that the  
   sonnet  
 Best repaid all the toil you expended upon  
   it;  
 It should reach with one impulse the end of  
   its course,  
 And for one final blow collect all of its  
   force;  
 Not a verse should be salient, but each one  
   should tend  
 With a wave-like up-gathering to break at  
   the end;  
 So, condensing the strength here, there  
   smoothing a wry kink,  
 He was killing the time, when up walked  
   Mr. D——;  
 At a few steps behind him, a small man in  
   glasses  
 Went dodging about, muttering, "Murder-  
   ers! asses!"  
 From out of his pocket a paper he 'd take,  
 With a proud look of martyrdom tied to  
   its stake,  
 And, reading a squib at himself, he 'd say,  
   "Here I see  
 'Gainst American letters a bloody conspir-  
   acy,  
 They are all by my personal enemies writ-  
   ten;  
 I must post an anonymous letter to Britain,  
 And show that this gall is the merest sug-  
   gestion  
 Of spite at my zeal on the Copyright ques-  
   tion,  
 For, on this side the water, 't is prudent to  
   pull  
 O'er the eyes of the public their national  
   wool,  
 By accusing of slavish respect to John Bull

All American authors who have more or  
   less  
 Of that anti-American humbug — success,  
 While in private we 're always embracing  
   the knees  
 Of some twopenny editor over the seas,  
 And liking his critical shoes, for you  
   know 't is  
 The whole aim of our lives to get one Eng-  
   lish notice;  
 My American puffs I would willingly burn  
   all  
 (They 're all from one source, monthly,  
   weekly, diurnal)  
 To get but a kick from a transmarine jour-  
   nal!"

So, culling the gibes of each critical  
   scorner  
 As if they were plums, and himself were  
   Jack Horner,  
 He came cautiously on, peeping round every  
   corner,  
 And into each hole where a weasel might  
   pass in,  
 Expecting the knife of some critic assassin,  
 Who stabs to the heart with a caricature,  
 Not so bad as those daubs of the Sun, to be  
   sure,  
 Yet done with a dagger-o'-type, whose vile  
   portraits  
 Disperse all one's good and condense all  
   one's poor traits.

Apollo looked up, hearing footsteps ap-  
   proaching,  
 And slipped out of sight the new rhymes  
   he was broaching, —  
 "Good day, Mr. D——, I 'm happy to meet  
 With a scholar so ripe, and a critic so neat,  
 Who through Grub Street the soul of a  
   gentleman carries;  
 What news from that suburb of London and  
   Paris  
 Which latterly makes such shrill claims to  
   monopolize  
 The credit of being the New World's me-  
   tropolis?"

"Why, nothing of consequence, save this  
   attack  
 On my friend there, behind, by some pitiful  
   hack,  
 Who thinks every national author a poor  
   one,

That is n't a copy of something that's foreign,  
And assaults the American Dick—"

"Nay, 't is clear  
That your Damon there's fond of a flea in  
his ear,  
And, if no one else furnished them gratis,  
on tick

He would buy some himself, just to hear the  
old click ;

Why, I honestly think, if some fool in Japan  
Should turn up his nose at the ' Poems on  
Man,'

(Which contain many verses as fine, by the  
bye,

As any that lately came under my eye,)  
Your friend there by some inward instinct  
would know it,

Would get it translated, reprinted, and show  
it ;

As a man might take off a high stock to  
exhibit

The autograph round his own neck of the  
gibbet ;

Nor would let it rest so, but fire column after  
column,

Signed Cato, or Brutus, or something as  
solemn,

By way of displaying his critical crosses,  
And tweaking that poor transatlantic pro-  
boscis,

His broadsides resulting (this last there's no  
doubt of)

In successively sinking the craft they're  
fired out of.

Now nobody knows when an author is hit,  
If he have not a public hysterical fit ;

Let him only keep close in his snug garret's  
dim ether,

And nobody'd think of his foes — or of him  
either ;

If an author have any least fibre of worth  
in him,

Abuse would but tickle the organ of mirth  
in him ;

All the critics on earth cannot crush with  
their ban

One word that's in tune with the nature of  
man."

"Well, perhaps so ; meanwhile I have  
brought you a book,  
Into which if you'll just have the goodness  
to look,

You may feel so delighted (when once you  
are through it)

As to deem it not unworth your while to re-  
view it,

And I think I can promise your thoughts,  
if you do,

A place in the next Democratic Review."

"The most thankless of gods you must  
surely have thought me,

For this is the forty-fourth copy you've  
brought me ;

I have given them away, or at least I have  
tried,

But I've forty-two left, standing all side by  
side

(The man who accepted that one copy  
died), —

From one end of a shelf to the other they  
reach,

'With the author's respects' neatly written  
in each.

The publisher, sure, will proclaim a Te  
Deum,

When he hears of that order the British  
Museum

Has sent for one set of what books were first  
printed

In America, little or big, — for't is hinted  
That this is the first truly tangible hope he

Has ever had raised for the sale of a copy.  
I've thought very often 't would be a good

thing

In all public collections of books, if a wing  
Were set off by itself, like the seas from the

dry lands,

Marked *Literature suited to desolate islands*,  
And filled with such books as could never be

read

Save by readers of proofs, forced to do it  
for bread, —

Such books as one's wrecked on in small  
country taverns,

Such as hermits might mortify over in  
caverns,

Such as Satan, if printing had then been  
invented,

As the climax of woe, would to Job have  
presented,

Such as Crusoe might dip in, although there  
are few so

Outrageously cornered by fate as poor Cru-  
soe ;

And since the philanthropists just now are  
banging

And gibbeting all who're in favor of hang-  
ing  
(Though Cheever has proved that the Bible  
and Altar  
Were let down from Heaven at the end of a  
halter,  
And that vital religion would dull and grow  
callous,  
Unrefreshed, now and then, with a sniff of  
the gallows), —  
And folks are beginning to think it looks  
odd,  
To choke a poor scamp for the glory of  
God;  
And that He, who esteems the Virginia reel  
A bait to draw saints from their spiritual  
weal,  
And regards the quadrille as a far greater  
knavery  
Than crushing his African children with  
slavery, —  
Since all who take part in a waltz or cotil-  
lon  
Are mounted for hell on the Devil's own  
pillion,  
Who, as every true orthodox Christian well  
knows,  
Approaches the heart through the door of  
the toes, —  
That He, I was saying, whose judgments  
are stored  
For such as take steps in despite of his  
word,  
Should look with delight on the agonized  
prancing  
Of a wretch who has not the least ground  
for his dancing,  
While the State, standing by, sings a verse  
from the Psalter  
About offering to God on his favorite hal-  
ter,  
And, when the legs droop from their twitch-  
ing divergence,  
Sells the clothes to a Jew, and the corpse  
to the surgeons; —  
Now, instead of all this, I think I can di-  
rect you all  
To a criminal code both humane and effect-  
ual; —  
I propose to shut up every doer of wrong  
With these desparate books, for such term,  
short or long,  
As, by statute in such cases made and pro-  
vided,  
Shall be by your wise legislators decided:

Thus: Let murderers be shut, to grow  
wiser and cooler,  
At hard labor for life on the works of  
Miss —;  
Petty thieves, kept from flagranter crimes  
by their fears,  
Shall peruse Yankee Doodle a blank term  
of years, —  
That American Punch, like the English, no  
doubt, —  
Just the sugar and lemons and spirit left  
out.

“But stay, here comes Tityrus Griswold,  
and leads on  
The flocks whom he first plucks alive, and  
then feeds on, —  
A loud-cackling swarm, in whose feathers  
warm drest,  
He goes for as perfect a — swan as the rest.

“There comes Emerson first, whose rich  
words, every one,  
Are like gold nails in temples to hang tro-  
phies on,  
Whose prose is grand verse, while his  
verse, the Lord knows,  
Is some of it pr— No, 't is not even  
prose;  
I'm speaking of metres; some poems have  
welled  
From those rare depths of soul that have  
ne'er been excelled;  
They're not epics, but that does n't matter  
a pin,  
In creating, the only hard thing's to  
begin;  
A grass-blade's no easier to make than an  
oak;  
If you've once found the way, you've  
achieved the grand stroke;  
In the worst of his poems are mines of rich  
matter,  
But thrown in a heap with a crash and a  
clatter;  
Now it is not one thing nor another alone  
Makes a poem, but rather the general  
tone,  
The something pervading, uniting the  
whole,  
The before unconceived, unconceivable soul,  
So that just in removing this trifle or that,  
you  
Take away, as it were, a chief limb of the  
statue;



Roots, wood, bark, and leaves singly perfect may be,  
But, clapt hodge-podge together, they  
don't make a tree.

"But, to come back to Emerson (whom,  
by the way,  
I believe we left waiting), — his is, we may  
say,

A Greek head on right Yankee shoulders,  
whose range

Has Olympus for one pole, for t' other the  
Exchange;

He seems, to my thinking (although I'm  
afraid

The comparison must, long ere this, have  
been made),

A Plotinus-Montaigne, where the Egyp-  
tian's gold mist

And the Gascon's shrewd wit cheek-by-jowl  
coexist;

All admire, and yet scarcely six converts  
he's got

To I don't (nor they either) exactly know  
what;

For though he builds glorious temples, 't is  
odd

He leaves never a doorway to get in a  
god.

'T is refreshing to old-fashioned people like  
me

To meet such a primitive Pagan as he,  
In whose mind all creation is duly re-  
spected

As parts of himself — just a little pro-  
jected;

And who's willing to worship the stars and  
the sun,

A convert to — nothing but Emerson.

So perfect a balance there is in his head,  
That he talks of things sometimes as if  
they were dead;

Life, nature, love, God, and affairs of that  
sort,

He looks at as merely ideas; in short,  
As if they were fossils stuck round in a  
cabinet,

Of such vast extent that our earth's a mere  
dab in it;

Composed just as he is inclined to con-  
jecture her,

Namely, one part pure earth, ninety-nine  
parts pure lecturer;

You are filled with delight at his clear  
demonstration,

Each figure, word, gesture, just fits the  
occasion,

With the quiet precision of science he'll  
sort 'em,

But you can't help suspecting the whole a  
*post mortem*.

"There are persons, mole-blind to the  
soul's make and style,

Who insist on a likeness 'twixt him and  
Carlyle;

To compare him with Plato would be  
vastly fairer,

Carlyle's the more burly, but E. is the  
rarer;

He sees fewer objects, but clearer, true-  
lier,

If C.'s as original, E.'s more peculiar;

That he's more of a man you might say of  
the one,

Of the other he's more of an Emerson;

C.'s the Titan, as shaggy of mind as of  
limb, —

E. the clear-eyed Olympian, rapid and  
slim;

The one's two thirds Norseman, the other  
half Greek,

Where the one's most abounding, the  
other's to seek;

C.'s generals require to be seen in the  
mass, —

E.'s specialties gain if enlarged by the glass;  
C. gives nature and God his own fits of the  
blues,

And rims common-sense things with mysti-  
cal hues, —

E. sits in a mystery calm and intense,

And looks coolly around him with sharp  
common-sense;

C. shows you how every-day matters unite  
With the dim transdiurnal recesses of  
night, —

While E., in a plain, preternatural way,  
Makes mysteries matters of mere every  
day;

C. draws all his characters quite *à la* Fu-  
seli, —

Not sketching their bundles of muscles and  
thews illy,

He paints with a brush so untamed and pro-  
fuse,

They seem nothing but bundles of muscles  
and thews;

E. is rather like Flaxman, lines strait and  
severe,

And a colorless outline, but full, round, and clear ; —

To the men he thinks worthy he frankly accords

The design of a white marble statue in words.

C. labors to get at the centre, and then Take a reckoning from there of his actions and men ;

E. calmly assumes the said centre as granted,

And, given himself, has whatever is wanted.

“He has imitators in scores, who omit No part of the man but his wisdom and wit, —

Who go carefully o’er the sky-blue of his brain,

And when he has skimmed it once, skim it again ;

If at all they resemble him, you may be sure it is

Because their shoals mirror his mists and obscurities,

As a mud-puddle seems deep as heaven for a minute,

While a cloud that floats o’er is reflected within it.

“There comes —, for instance ; to see him’s rare sport,

Tread in Emerson’s tracks with legs painfully short ;

How he jumps, how he strains, and gets red in the face,

To keep step with the mystagogue’s natural pace !

He follows as close as a stick to a rocket, His fingers exploring the prophet’s each pocket.

Fie, for shame, brother bard ; with good fruit of your own,

Can’t you let Neighbor Emerson’s orchards alone ?

Besides, ’t is no use, you’ll not find e’en a core, —

— has picked up all the windfalls before. They might strip every tree, and E. never would catch ’em,

His Hesperides have no rude dragon to watch ’em ;

When they send him a dishful, and ask him to try ’em,

He never suspects how the sly rogues came by ’em ;

He wonders why ’t is there are none such his trees on,

And thinks ’em the best he has tasted this season.

“Yonder, calm as a cloud, Alcott stalks in a dream,

And fancies himself in thy groves, Academe,

With the Parthenon nigh, and the olive-trees o’er him,

And never a fact to perplex him or bore him,

With a snug room at Plato’s when night comes, to walk to,

And people from morning till midnight to talk to,

And from midnight till morning, nor snore in their listening ; —

So he muses, his face with the joy of it glistening,

For his highest conceit of a happiest state is Where they’d live upon acorns, and hear him talk gratis ;

And indeed, I believe, no man ever talked better, —

Each sentence hangs perfectly poised to a letter ;

He seems piling words, but there’s royal dust hid

In the heart of each sky-piercing pyramid.

While he talks he is great, but goes out like a taper,

If you shut him up closely with pen, ink, and paper ;

Yet his fingers itch for ’em from morning till night,

And he thinks he does wrong if he don’t always write ;

In this, as in all things, a lamb among men,

He goes to sure death when he goes to his pen.

“Close behind him is Brownson, his moth very full

With attempting to gulp a Gregorian bul ; Who contrives, spite of that, to pour ouas

he goes

A stream of transparent and forcible pre ; He shifts quite about, then proceeds to e-

pound

That ’t is merely the earth, not himself, th turns round,

And wishes it clearly impressed on yo mind

That the weathercock rules and not follows  
the wind ;  
Proving first, then as deftly confuting each  
side,  
With no doctrine pleased that's not some-  
where denied,  
He lays the denier away on the shelf,  
And then — down beside him lies gravely  
himself.  
He's the Salt River boatman, who always  
stands willing  
To convey friend or foe without charging a  
shilling,  
And so fond of the trip that, when leisure's  
to spare,  
He'll row himself up, if he can't get a fare.  
The worst of it is, that his logic's so strong,  
That of two sides he commonly chooses the  
wrong ;  
If there is only one, why, he'll split it in two,  
And first pummel this half, then that, black  
and blue.  
That white's white needs no proof, but it  
takes a deep fellow  
To prove it jet-black, and that jet-black is  
yellow.  
He offers the true faith to drink in a  
sieve, —  
When it reaches your lips there's naught  
left to believe  
But a few silly- (syllable, I mean,) -gisms  
that squat 'em  
Like tadpoles, o'erjoyed with the mud at the  
bottom.

“There is Willis, all *natty* and jaunty and  
gay,  
Who says his best things in so foppish a  
way,  
With conceits and pet phrases so thickly  
o'erlaying 'em,  
That one hardly knows whether to thank  
him for saying 'em;  
Over-ornament ruins both poem and prose,  
Just conceive of a Muse with a ring in her  
nose !  
His prose had a natural grace of its own,  
And enough of it, too, if he'd let it alone ;  
But he twitches and jerks so, one fairly gets  
tired,  
And is forced to forgive where one might  
have admired ;  
Yet whenever it slips away free and un-  
laced,  
It runs like a stream with a musical waste,

And gurgles along with the liquidest  
sweep ; —  
'T is not deep as a river, but who'd have it  
deep ?  
In a country where scarcely a village is  
found  
That has not its author sublime and pro-  
found,  
For some one to be slightly shallow's a duty,  
And Willis's shallowness makes half his  
beauty.  
His prose winds along with a blithe, gur-  
gling error,  
And reflects all of Heaven it can see in its  
mirror :  
'T is a narrowish strip, but it is not an arti-  
fice ;  
'T is the true out-of-doors with its genuine  
hearty phiz ;  
It is Nature herself, and there's something  
in that,  
Since most brains reflect but the crown of a  
hat.  
Few volumes I know to read under a tree,  
More truly delightful than his *A l'Abri*,  
With the shadows of leaves flowing over  
your book,  
Like ripple-shades netting the bed of a  
brook ;  
With June coming softly your shoulder to  
look over,  
Breezes waiting to turn every leaf of your  
book over,  
And Nature to criticise still as you read, —  
The page that bears that is a rare one in-  
deed.

“He's so innate a cockney, that had he  
been born  
Where plain bare-skin's the only full-dress  
that is worn,  
He'd have given his own such an air that  
you'd say  
'T had been made by a tailor to lounge in  
Broadway.  
His nature's a glass of champagne with the  
foam on 't,  
As tender as Fletcher, as witty as Beau-  
mont ;  
So his best things are done in the flush of  
the moment ;  
If he wait, all is spoiled ; he may stir it and  
shake it,  
But, the fixed air once gone, he can never  
re-make it.

He might be a marvel of easy delightfulness,  
 If he would not sometimes leave the *r* out  
 of sprightfulness;  
 And he ought to let Scripture alone — 't is  
 self-slaughter,  
 For nobody likes inspiration-and-water.  
 He'd have been just the fellow to sup at  
 the Mermaid,  
 Cracking jokes at rare Ben, with an eye to  
 the barmaid,  
 His wit running up as Canary ran down, —  
 The topmost bright bubble on the wave of  
 The Town.

“Here comes Parker, the Orson of par-  
 sons, a man  
 Whom the Church undertook to put under  
 her ban  
 (The Church of Socinus, I mean), — his  
 opinions  
 Being So- (ultra) -cinian, they shocked the  
 Socinians;  
 They believed — faith, I 'm puzzled — I  
 think I may call  
 Their belief a believing in nothing at all,  
 Or something of that sort; I know they all  
 went  
 For a general union of total dissent:  
 He went a step farther; without cough or  
 hem,  
 He frankly avowed he believed not in them;  
 And, before he could be jumbled up or pre-  
 vented,  
 From their orthodox kind of dissent he  
 dissented.  
 There was heresy here, you perceive, for  
 the right  
 Of privately judging means simply that  
 light  
 Has been granted to *me*, for deciding on  
*you*;  
 And in happier times, before Atheism grew,  
 The deed contained clauses for cooking you  
 too:  
 Now at Xerxes and Knut we all laugh, yet  
 our foot  
 With the same wave is wet that mocked  
 Xerxes and Knut,  
 And we all entertain a secure private notion,  
 That our *Thus far!* will have a great weight  
 with the ocean.  
 'T was so with our liberal Christians: they  
 bore  
 With sincerest conviction their chairs to the  
 shore;

They brandished their worn theological  
 birches,  
 Bade natural progress keep out of the  
 Churches,  
 And expected the lines they had drawn to  
 prevail  
 With the fast-rising tide to keep out of  
 their pale;  
 They had formerly dammed the Pontifical  
 See,  
 And the same thing, they thought, would  
 do nicely for P.;  
 But he turned up his nose at their mum-  
 ming and shamming,  
 And cared (shall I say?) not a d — for  
 their damming;  
 So they first read him out of their church,  
 and next minute  
 Turned round and declared he had never  
 been in it.  
 But the ban was too small or the man was  
 too big,  
 For he recked not their bells, books, and  
 candles a fig  
 (He scarce looks like a man who would *stay*  
 treated shabbily,  
 Sophroniscus' son's head o'er the features  
 of Rabelais); —  
 He bangs and bethwacks them, — their backs  
 he salutes  
 With the whole tree of knowledge torn up  
 by the roots;  
 His sermons with satire are plenteously  
 verjuiced,  
 And he talks in one breath of Confutzee,  
 Cass, Zerduscht,  
 Jack Robinson, Peter the Hermit, Strap,  
 Dathan,  
 Cush, Pitt (not the bottomless, *that* he 's  
 no faith in),  
 Pan, Pillicock, Shakespeare, Paul, Toots,  
 Monsieur Tonson,  
 Aldebaran, Alexander, Ben Khorat, Ben  
 Jonson,  
 Thoth, Richter, Joe Smith, Father Paul,  
 Judah Monis,  
 Musæus, Muretus, *hem*, —  $\mu$  Scorpionis,  
 Maccabee, Maccaboy, Mac — Mac — ah!  
 Machiavelli,  
 Condorcet, Count d'Orsay, Conder, Say,  
 Ganganelli,  
 Orion, O'Connell, the Chevalier D'O,  
 (See the Memoirs of Sully,)  $\tau\delta\ \pi\alpha\nu$ , the  
 great toe  
 Of the statue of Jupiter, now made to pass



For that of Jew Peter by good Romish  
brass,  
(You may add for yourselves, for I find it  
a bore,  
All the names you have ever, or not, heard  
before,  
And when you've done that — why, invent  
a few more).  
His hearers can't tell you on Sunday be-  
forehand,  
If in that day's discourse they'll be Bibled  
or Koraned,  
For he's seized the idea (by his martyr-  
dom fired)  
That all men (not orthodox) *may be in-*  
*spired*;  
Yet though wisdom profane with his creed  
he may weave in,  
He makes it quite clear what he *does n't*  
believe in,  
While some, who decry him, think all  
Kingdom Come  
Is a sort of a, kind of a, species of Hum,  
Of which, as it were, so to speak, not a  
crumb  
Would be left, if we did n't keep carefully  
mum,  
And, to make a clean breast, that 't is per-  
fectly plain  
That *all* kinds of wisdom are somewhat  
profane;  
Now P.'s credent than this may be lighter or  
darker,  
But in one thing, 't is clear, he has faith,  
namely — Parker;  
And this is what makes him the crowd-  
drawing preacher,  
There's a background of god to each hard-  
working feature,  
Every word that he speaks has been fierily  
furnaced  
In the blast of a life that has struggled in  
earnest:  
There he stands, looking more like a  
ploughman than priest,  
If not dreadfully awkward, not graceful at  
least,  
His gestures all downright and same, if  
you will,  
As of brown-fisted Hobnail in hoeing a  
drill;  
But his periods fall on you, stroke after  
stroke,  
Like the blows of a lumberer felling an  
oak,

You forget the man wholly, you're thank-  
ful to meet  
With a preacher who smacks of the field  
and the street,  
And to hear, you're not over-particular  
whence,  
Almost Taylor's profusion, quite Latimer's  
sense.

"There is Bryant, as quiet, as cool, and  
as dignified,  
As a smooth, silent iceberg, that never is  
ignified,  
Save when by reflection 't is kindled o'  
nights  
With a semblance of flame by the chill  
Northern Lights.  
He may rank (Griswold says so) first bard  
of your nation  
(There's no doubt that he stands in su-  
preme iceolation),  
Your topmost Parnassus he may set his  
heel on,  
But no warm applauses come, peal follow-  
ing peal on, —  
He's too smooth and too polished to hang  
any zeal on:  
Unqualified merits, I'll grant, if you  
choose, he has 'em,  
But he lacks the one merit of kindling  
enthusiasm;  
If he stir you at all, it is just, on my soul,  
Like being stirred up with the very North  
Pole.

"He is very nice reading in summer,  
but *inter*  
*Nos*, we don't want *extra* freezing in win-  
ter;  
Take him up in the depth of July, my ad-  
vice is,  
When you feel an Egyptian devotion to  
ices.  
But, deduct all you can, there's enough  
that's right good in him,  
He has a true soul for field, river, and  
wood in him;  
And his heart, in the midst of brick walls,  
or where'er it is,  
Glows, softens, and thrills with the tender-  
est charities —  
To you mortals that delve in this trade-  
ridden planet?  
No, to old Berkshire's hills, with their  
limestone and granite.

If you 're one who *in loco* (add *foco* here)  
*desipis*,  
 You will get of his outermost heart (as I  
 guess) a piece;  
 But you 'd get deeper down if you came as  
 a precipice,  
 And would break the last seal of its in-  
 wardest fountain,  
 If you only could palm yourself off for a  
 mountain.  
 Mr. Quivis, or somebody quite as discern-  
 ing,  
 Some scholar who 's hourly expecting his  
 learning,  
 Calls B. the American Wordsworth; but  
 Wordsworth  
 May be rated at more than your whole  
 tuneful herd 's worth.  
 No, don't be absurd, he 's an excellent  
 Bryant;  
 But, my friends, you 'll endanger the life  
 of your client,  
 By attempting to stretch him up into a  
 giant:  
 If you choose to compare him, I think  
 there are two per-  
 sons fit for a parallel — Thomson and  
 Cowper;<sup>1</sup>  
 I don't mean exactly, — there 's something  
 of each,  
 There 's T.'s love of nature, C.'s penchant  
 to preach;  
 Just mix up their minds so that C.'s spice  
 of craziness  
 Shall balance and neutralize T.'s turn for  
 laziness;  
 And it gives you a brain cool, quite fric-  
 tionless, quiet,  
 Whose internal police nips the buds of all  
 riot, —  
 A brain like a permanent strait-jacket put on  
 The heart that strives vainly to burst off a  
 button, —  
 A brain which, without being slow or me-  
 chanic,  
 Does more than a larger less drilled, more  
 volcanic;  
 He 's a Cowper condensed, with no crazi-  
 ness bitten,  
 And the advantage that Wordsworth be-  
 fore him had written.

“But, my dear little bardlings, don't  
 prick up your ears  
 Nor suppose I would rank you and Bryant  
 as peers;  
 If I call him an iceberg, I don't mean to  
 say  
 There is nothing in that which is grand in  
 its way;  
 He is almost the one of your poets that  
 knows  
 How much grace, strength, and dignity lie  
 in Repose;  
 If he sometimes fall short, he is too wise  
 to mar  
 His thought's modest fulness by going too  
 far;  
 'T would be well if your authors should all  
 make a trial  
 Of what virtue there is in severe self-  
 denial,  
 And measure their writings by Hesiod's  
 staff,  
 Which teaches that all has less value than  
 half.

“There is Whittier, whose swelling and  
 vehement heart  
 Strains the strait-breasted drab of the  
 Quaker apart,  
 And reveals the live Man, still supreme  
 and erect,  
 Underneath the bemummifying wrappers of  
 sex;  
 There was ne'er a man born who had more  
 of the swing  
 Of the true lyric bard and all that kind of  
 thing;  
 And his failures arise (though he seem not  
 to know it)  
 From the very same cause that has made  
 him a poet, —  
 A fervor of mind which knows no separa-  
 tion  
 'Twixt simple excitement and pure inspira-  
 tion,  
 As my Pythoness erst sometimes erred  
 from not knowing  
 If 't were I or mere wind through her tri-  
 pod was blowing;  
 Let his mind once get head in its favorite  
 direction  
 And the torrent of verse bursts the dams  
 of reflection,  
 While, borne with the rush of the metre  
 along,

<sup>1</sup> To demonstrate quickly and easily how per-  
 versely absurd 't is to sound this name *Cowper*,  
 As people in general call him named *super*,  
 I remark that he rhymes it himself with horse-trooper.

The poet may chance to go right or go wrong,  
 Content with the whirl and delirium of song;  
 Then his grammar's not always correct,  
 nor his rhymes,  
 And he's prone to repeat his own lyrics sometimes,  
 Not his best, though, for those are struck off at white-heats  
 When the heart in his breast like a trip-hammer beats,  
 And can ne'er be repeated again any more  
 Than they could have been carefully plotted before:  
 Like old what's-his-name there at the battle of Hastings  
 (Who, however, gave more than mere rhythmical bastings),  
 Our Quaker leads off metaphorical fights  
 For reform and whatever they call human rights,  
 Both singing and striking in front of the war,  
 And hitting his foes with the mallet of Thor;  
*Anne hæc*, one exclaims, on beholding his knocks,  
*Vestis filii tui*, O leather-clad Fox?  
 Can that be thy son, in the battle's mid din,  
 Preaching brotherly love and then driving it in  
 To the brain of the tough old Goliath of sin,  
 With the smoothest of pebbles from Castaly's spring  
 Impressed on his hard moral sense with a sling?

“All honor and praise to the right-hearted bard  
 Who was true to The Voice when such service was hard,  
 Who himself was so free he dared sing for the slave  
 When to look but a protest in silence was brave;  
 All honor and praise to the women and men  
 Who spoke out for the dumb and the down-trodden then!  
 It needs not to name them, already for each  
 I see History preparing the statue and niche;

They were harsh, but shall *you* be so shocked at hard words  
 Who have beaten your pruning-hooks up into swords,  
 Whose rewards and hurrahs men are surer to gain  
 By the reaping of men and of women than grain?  
 Why should *you* stand aghast at their fierce wordy war, if  
 You scalp one another for Bank or for Tariff?  
 Your calling them cut-throats and knaves all day long  
 Does n't prove that the use of hard language is wrong;  
 While the World's heart beats quicker to think of such men  
 As signed Tyranny's doom with a bloody steel-pen,  
 While on Fourth-of-July's beardless orators fright one  
 With hints at Harmodius and Aristogeiton,  
 You need not look shy at your sisters and brothers  
 Who stab with sharp words for the freedom of others;—  
 No, a wreath, twine a wreath for the loyal and true  
 Who, for sake of the many, dared stand with the few,  
 Not of blood-spattered laurel for enemies braved,  
 But of broad, peaceful oak-leaves for citizens saved!

“Here comes Dana, abstractedly loitering along,  
 Involved in a paulo-post-future of song,  
 Who'll be going to write what'll never be written  
 Till the Muse, ere he think of it, gives him the mitten,—  
 Who is so well aware of how things should be done,  
 That his own works displease him before they're begun,—  
 Who so well all that makes up good poetry knows,  
 That the best of his poems is written in prose;  
 All saddled and bridled stood Pegasus waiting,  
 He was booted and spurred, but he loitered debating;

In a very grave question his soul was immersed, —  
 Which foot in the stirrup he ought to put first;  
 And, while this point and that he judiciously dwelt on,  
 He, somehow or other, had written Paul Felton,  
 Whose beauties or faults, whichever you see there,  
 You'll allow only genius could hit upon either.  
 That he once was the Idle Man none will deplore,  
 But I fear he will never be anything more;  
 The ocean of song heaves and glitters before him,  
 The depth and the vastness and longing sweep o'er him,  
 He knows every breaker and shoal on the chart,  
 He has the Coast Pilot and so on by heart,  
 Yet he spends his whole life, like the man in the fable,  
 In learning to swim on his library-table.

“There swaggers John Neal, who has wasted in Maine  
 The sinews and cords of his pugilist brain,  
 Who might have been poet, but that, in its stead, he  
 Preferred to believe that he was so already;  
 Too hasty to wait till Art's ripe fruit should drop,  
 He must pelt down an unripe and colicky crop;  
 Who took to the law, and had this sterling plea for it,  
 It required him to quarrel, and paid him a fee for it;  
 A man who's made less than he might have, because  
 He always has thought himself more than he was, —  
 Who, with very good natural gifts as a bard,  
 Broke the strings of his lyre out by striking too hard,  
 And cracked half the notes of a truly fine voice,  
 Because song drew less instant attention than noise.  
 Ah, men do not know how much strength is in poise,  
 That he goes the farthest who goes far enough,

And that all beyond that is just bother and stuff.  
 No vain man matures, he makes too much new wood;  
 His blooms are too thick for the fruit to be good;  
 'T is the modest man ripens, 't is he that achieves,  
 Just what's needed of sunshine and shade he receives;  
 Grapes, to mellow, require the cool dark of their leaves;  
 Neal wants balance; he throws his mind always too far,  
 Whisking out flocks of comets, but never a star;  
 He has so much muscle, and loves so to show it,  
 That he strips himself naked to prove he's a poet,  
 And, to show he could leap Art's wide ditch, if he tried,  
 Jumps clean o'er it, and into the hedge t' other side.  
 He has strength, but there's nothing about him in keeping;  
 One gets surelier onward by walking than leaping;  
 He has used his own sinews himself to distress,  
 And had done vastly more had he done vastly less;  
 In letters, too soon is as bad as too late;  
 Could he only have waited he might have been great;  
 But he plumped into Helicon up to the waist,  
 And muddled the stream ere he took his first taste.

“There is Hawthorne, with genius so shrinking and rare  
 That you hardly at first see the strength that is there;  
 A frame so robust, with a nature so sweet,  
 So earnest, so graceful, so lithe and so fleet,  
 Is worth a descent from Olympus to meet;  
 'T is as if a rough oak that for ages had stood,  
 With his gnarled bony branches like ribs of the wood,  
 Should bloom, after cycles of struggle and scathe,  
 With a single anemone trembly and rathe;



His strength is so tender, his wildness so meek,  
 That a suitable parallel sets one to seek, —  
 He's a John Bunyan Fouqué, a Puritan Tieck;  
 When Nature was shaping him, clay was not granted  
 For making so full-sized a man as she wanted,  
 So, to fill out her model, a little she spared  
 From some finer-grained stuff for a woman prepared,  
 And she could not have hit a more excellent plan  
 For making him fully and perfectly man.  
 The success of her scheme gave her so much delight,  
 That she tried it again, shortly after, in Dwight;  
 Only, while she was kneading and shaping the clay,  
 She sang to her work in her sweet childish way,  
 And found, when she'd put the last touch to his soul,  
 That the music had somehow got mixed with the whole.

"Here's Cooper, who's written six volumes to show  
 He's as good as a lord: well, let's grant that he's so;  
 If a person prefer that description of praise,  
 Why, a coronet's certainly cheaper than bays;  
 But he need take no pains to convince us he's not  
 (As his enemies say) the American Scott.  
 Choose any twelve men, and let C. read aloud  
 That one of his novels of which he's most proud,  
 And I'd lay any bet that, without ever quitting  
 Their box, they'd be all, to a man, for acquitting.  
 He has drawn you one character, though, that is new,  
 One wildflower he's plucked that is wet with the dew  
 Of this fresh Western world, and, the thing not to mince,  
 He has done naught but copy it ill ever since;  
 His Indians, with proper respect be it said,

Are just Natty Bumppo, daubed over with red,  
 And his very Long Toms are the same useful Nat,  
 Rigger up in duck pants and a sou'wester hat  
 (Though once in a Coffin, a good chance was found  
 To have slipped the old fellow away underground).  
 All his other men-figures are clothes upon sticks,  
 The *dernière chemise* of a man in a fix  
 (As a captain besieged, when his garrison's small,  
 Sets up caps upon poles to be seen o'er the wall);  
 And the women he draws from one model don't vary,  
 All sappy as maples and flat as a prairie.  
 When a character's wanted, he goes to the task  
 As a cooper would do in composing a cask;  
 He picks out the staves, of their qualities heedful,  
 Just hoops them together as tight as is needful,  
 And, if the best fortune should crown the attempt, he  
 Has made at the most something wooden and empty.

"Don't suppose I would underrate Cooper's abilities;  
 If I thought you'd do that, I should feel very ill at ease;  
 The men who have given to *one* character life  
 And objective existence are not very rife;  
 You may number them all, both prose-writers and singers,  
 Without overrunning the bounds of your fingers,  
 And Natty won't go to oblivion quicker  
 Than Adams the parson or Primrose the vicar.

"There is one thing in Cooper I like, too, and that is  
 That on manners he lectures his countrymen gratis;  
 Not precisely so either, because, for a rarity,  
 He is paid for his tickets in unpopularity.  
 Now he may overcharge his American pictures,

But you'll grant there's a good deal of  
truth in his strictures;  
And I honor the man who is willing to sink  
Half his present repute for the freedom to  
think,  
And, when he has thought, be his cause  
strong or weak,  
Will risk t' other half for the freedom to  
speak,  
Caring naught for what vengeance the  
mob has in store,  
Let that mob be the upper ten thousand or  
lower.

"There are truths you Americans need  
to be told,  
And it never 'll refute them to swagger  
and scold;  
John Bull, looking o'er the Atlantic, in  
choler  
At your aptness for trade, says you worship  
the dollar;  
But to scorn such eye-dollar-try's what  
very few do,  
And John goes to that church as often as  
you do.  
No matter what John says, don't try to  
outrrow him,  
'T is enough to go quietly on and outgrow  
him;  
Like most fathers, Bull hates to see Num-  
ber One  
Displacing himself in the mind of his son,  
And detests the same faults in himself  
he'd neglected  
When he sees them again in his child's  
glass reflected;  
To love one another you're too like by  
half;  
If he is a bull, you're a pretty stout calf,  
And tear your own pasture for naught but  
to show  
What a nice pair of horns you're begin-  
ning to grow.

"There are one or two things I should  
just like to hint,  
For you don't often get the truth told you  
in print;  
The most of you (this is what strikes all  
beholders)  
Have a mental and physical stoop in the  
shoulders;  
Though you ought to be free as the winds  
and the waves,

You've the gait and the manners of run-  
away slaves;  
Though you brag of your New World, you  
don't half believe in it;  
And as much of the Old as is possible  
weave in it;  
Your goddess of freedom, a tight, buxom  
girl,  
With lips like a cherry and teeth like a  
pearl,  
With eyes bold as Herë's, and hair floating  
free,  
And full of the sun as the spray of the sea,  
Who can sing at a husking or romp at a  
shearing,  
Who can trip through the forests alone  
without fearing,  
Who can drive home the cows with a song  
through the grass,  
Keeps glancing aside into Europe's cracked  
glass,  
Hides her red hands in gloves, pinches up  
her lithe waist,  
And makes herself wretched with transma-  
rine taste;  
She loses her fresh country charm when  
she takes  
Any mirror except her own rivers and  
lakes.

"You steal Englishmen's books and  
think Englishmen's thought,  
With their salt on her tail your wild eagle  
is caught;  
Your literature suits its each whisper and  
motion  
To what will be thought of it over the  
ocean;  
The cast clothes of Europe your statesman-  
ship tries  
And mumbles again the old blarneys and  
lies;—  
Forget Europe wholly, your veins throb  
with blood,  
To which the dull current in hers is but mud:  
Let her sneer, let her say your experiment  
fails,  
In her voice there's a tremble e'en now  
while she rails,  
And your shore will soon be in the nature  
of things  
Covered thick with gilt drift-wood of cast-  
away kings,  
Where alone, as it were in a Longfellow's  
Waif,

Her fugitive pieces will find themselves safe.

O my friends, thank your god, if you have one, that he

'Twixt the Old World and you set the gulf of a sea;

Be strong-backed, brown-handed, upright as your pines,

By the scale of a hemisphere shape your designs,

Be true to yourselves and this new nineteenth age,

As a statue by Powers, or a picture by Page,

Plough, sail, forge, build, carve, paint, make all over new,

To your own New-World instincts contrive to be true,

Keep your ears open wide to the Future's first call,

Be whatever you will, but yourselves first of all,

Stand fronting the dawn on Toil's heaven-scaling peaks,

And become my new race of more practical Greeks. —

Hem ! your likeness at present, I shudder to tell o't,

Is that you have your slaves, and the Greek had his helot."

Here a gentleman present, who had in his attic

More pepper than brains, shrieked, "The man's a fanatic,

I'm a capital tailor with warm tar and feathers,

And will make him a suit that'll serve in all weathers;

But we'll argue the point first, I'm willing to reason 't,

Palaver before condemnation's but decent; So, through my humble person, Humanity begs

Of the friends of true freedom a loan of bad eggs."

But Apollo let one such a look of his show forth

As when *ἦτε νύκτι εὐκίως*, and so forth,

And the gentleman somehow slunk out of the way,

But, as he was going, gained courage to say, —

"At slavery in the abstract my whole soul rebels,

I am as strongly opposed to 't as any one else."

"Ay, no doubt, but whenever I've happened to meet

With a wrong or a crime, it is always concrete,"

Answered Phœbus severely; then turning to us,

"The mistake of such fellows as just made the fuss

Is only in taking a great busy nation For a part of their pitiful cotton-plantation. —

But there comes Miranda, Zeus ! where shall I flee to ?

She has such a penchant for bothering me too !

She always keeps asking if I don't observe a Particular likeness 'twixt her and Minerva;

She tells me my efforts in verse are quite clever; —

She's been travelling now, and will be worse than ever;

One would think, though, a sharp-sighted noter she'd be

Of all that's worth mentioning over the sea,

For a woman must surely see well, if she try,

The whole of whose being's a capital I: She will take an old notion, and make it

her own,

By saying it o'er in her Sibylline tone, Or persuade you 't is something tremendously deep,

By repeating it so as to put you to sleep; And she well may defy any mortal to see

through it,

When once she has mixed up her infinite me through it.

There is one thing she owns in her own single right,

It is native and genuine — namely, her spite;

Though, when acting as censor, she privately blows

A censer of vanity 'neath her own nose."

Here Miranda came up, and said, "Phœbus ! you know

That the Infinite Soul has its infinite woe, As I ought to know, having lived cheek by

jowl,

Since the day I was born, with the Infinite Soul;

I myself introduced, I myself, I alone,  
 To my Land's better life authors solely my  
     own,  
 Who the sad heart of earth on their shoul-  
     ders have taken,  
 Whose works sound a depth by Life's  
     quiet unshaken,  
 Such as Shakespeare, for instance, the  
     Bible, and Bacon,  
 Not to mention my own works; Time's  
     nadir is fleet,  
 And, as for myself, I'm quite out of con-  
     ceit "—

"Quite out of conceit! I'm enchanted  
     to hear it,"  
 Cried Apollo aside. "Who'd have thought  
     she was near it?  
 To be sure, one is apt to exhaust those  
     commodities  
 One uses too fast, yet in this case as odd it is  
 As if Neptune should say to his turbots  
     and whittings,  
 'I'm as much out of salt as Miranda's own  
     writings'  
 (Which, as she in her own happy manner  
     has said,  
 Sound a depth, for 't is one of the functions  
     of lead).  
 She often has asked me if I could not find  
 A place somewhere near me that suited her  
     mind;  
 I know but a single one vacant, which she,  
 With her rare talent that way, would fit to  
     a T.  
 And it would not imply any pause or cessa-  
     tion  
 In the work she esteems her peculiar voca-  
     tion, —  
 She may enter on duty to-day, if she  
     chooses,  
 And remain Tiring-woman for life to the  
     Muses."

Miranda meanwhile has succeeded in  
     driving  
 Up into a corner, in spite of their striving,  
 A small flock of terrified victims, and  
     there,  
 With an I-turn-the-crank-of-the-Universe  
     air  
 And a tone which, at least to *my* fancy, ap-  
     pears  
 Not so much to be entering as boxing your  
     ears,

Is unfolding a tale (of herself, I surmise,  
 For 't is dotted as thick as a peacock's with  
     I's).

*Apropos* of Miranda, I'll rest on my oars  
 And drift through a trifling digression on  
     bores,

For, though not wearing ear-rings in *more*  
     *majorum*,  
 Our ears are kept bored just as if we still  
     were 'em.

There was one feudal custom worth keep-  
     ing; at least,  
 Roasted bores made a part of each well-  
     ordered feast,

And of all quiet pleasures the very *ne plus*  
 Was in hunting wild bores as the tame  
     ones hunt us.

Archæologists, I know, who have personal  
     fears

Of this wise application of hounds and of  
     spears,

Have tried to make out, with a zeal more  
     than wonted,

'T was a kind of wild swine that our ances-  
     tors hunted;

But I'll never believe that the age which  
     has strewn

Europe o'er with cathedrals, and otherwise  
     shown

That it knew what was what, could by  
     chance not have known

(Spending, too, its chief time with its buff  
     on, no doubt)

Which beast 't would improve the world  
     most to thin out.

I divide bores myself, in the manner of  
     rifles,

Into two great divisions, regardless of tri-  
     fles; —

There's your smooth-bore and screw-bore,  
     who do not much vary

In the weight of cold lead they respectively  
     carry.

The smooth-bore is one in whose essence  
     the mind

Not a corner nor cranny to cling by can  
     find;

You feel as in nightmares sometimes, when  
     you slip

Down a steep slated roof, where there's  
     nothing to grip;

You slide and you slide, the blank horror  
     increases, —

You had rather by far be at once smashed  
     to pieces;



You fancy a whirlpool below white and frothing,  
 And finally drop off and light upon — nothing.  
 The screw-bore has twists in him, faint predilections  
 For going just wrong in the tritest directions;  
 When he's wrong he is flat, when he's right he can't show it,  
 He'll tell you what Snooks said about the new poet,<sup>1</sup>  
 Or how Fogrum was outraged by Tennyson's Princess;  
 He has spent all his spare time and intellect since his  
 Birth in perusing, on each art and science,  
 Just the books in which no one puts any reliance,  
 And though *nemo*, we're told, *horis omnibus sapit*,  
 The rule will not fit him, however you shape it,  
 For he has a perennial foison of sappiness;  
 He has just enough force to spoil half your day's happiness,  
 And to make him a sort of mosquito to be with,  
 But just not enough to dispute or agree with.

These sketches I made (not to be too explicit)  
 From two honest fellows who made me a visit,  
 And broke, like the tale of the Bear and the Fiddle,  
 My reflections on Halleck short off by the middle;  
 I sha'n't now go into the subject more deeply,  
 For I notice that some of my readers look sleep'y;  
 I will barely remark that, 'mongst civilized nations,  
 There's none that displays more exemplary patience  
 Under all sorts of boring, at all sorts of hours,  
 From all sorts of desperate persons, than ours.  
 Not to speak of our papers, our State legislatures,

And other such trials for sensitive natures,  
 Just look for a moment at Congress, — appalled,  
 My fancy shrinks back from the phantom it called;  
 Why, there's scarcely a member unworthy to frown  
 'Neath what Fourier nicknames the Boreal crown;  
 Only think what that infinite bore-pow'r could do  
 If applied with a utilitarian view;  
 Suppose, for example, we shipped it with care  
 To Sahara's great desert and let it bore there;  
 If they held one short session and did nothing else,  
 They'd fill the whole waste with Artesian wells.  
 But 't is time now with pen phonographic to follow  
 Through some more of his sketches our laughing Apollo: —

“There comes Harry Franco, and, as he draws near,  
 You find that's a smile which you took for a sneer;  
 One half of him contradicts t' other; his wont  
 Is to say very sharp things and do very blunt;  
 His manner's as hard as his feelings are tender,  
 And a *sortie* he'll make when he means to surrender;  
 He's in joke half the time when he seems to be sternest,  
 When he seems to be joking, be sure he's in earnest;  
 He has common sense in a way that's uncommon,  
 Hates humbug and cant, loves his friends like a woman,  
 Builds his dislikes of cards and his friendships of oak,  
 Loves a prejudice better than aught but a joke,  
 Is half upright Quaker, half downright Come-outer,  
 Loves Freedom too well to go stark mad about her,  
 Quite artless himself, is a lover of Art,

<sup>1</sup> (If you call Snooks an owl, he will show by his looks That he's morally certain you're jealous of Snooks.)

Shuts you out of his secrets and into his heart,  
 And though not a poet, yet all must admire  
 In his letters of Pinto his skill on the liar.

"There comes Poe, with his raven, like  
 Barnaby Rudge,  
 Three fifths of him genius and two fifths  
 sheer fudge,  
 Who talks like a book of iambs and pentameters,  
 In a way to make people of common sense  
 damn metres,  
 Who has written some things quite the  
 best of their kind,  
 But the heart somehow seems all squeezed  
 out by the mind,  
 Who — But hey-day! What's this?  
 Messieurs Mathews and Poe,  
 You must n't fling mud-balls at Longfellow  
 so,  
 Does it make a man worse that his character's  
 such  
 As to make his friends love him (as you  
 think) too much?  
 Why, there is not a bard at this moment  
 alive  
 More willing than he that his fellows should  
 thrive;  
 While you are abusing him thus, even now  
 He would help either one of you out of a  
 slough;  
 You may say that he's smooth and all that  
 till you're hoarse,  
 But remember that elegance also is force;  
 After polishing granite as much as you will,  
 The heart keeps its tough old persistency  
 still;  
 Deduct all you can, *that* still keeps you at  
 bay;  
 Why, he'll live till men weary of Collins  
 and Gray.  
 I'm not over-fond of Greek metres in English,  
 To me rhyme's a gain, so it be not too jinglish,  
 And your modern hexameter verses are no  
 more  
 Like Greek ones than sleek Mr. Pope is  
 like Homer;  
 As the roar of the sea to the coo of a pigeon  
 is,  
 So, compared to your moderns, sounds old  
 Melesigenes;

I may be too partial, the reason, perhaps,  
 o't is  
 That I've heard the old blind man recite  
 his own rhapsodies,  
 And my ear with that music impregnate  
 may be,  
 Like the poor exiled shell with the soul of  
 the sea,  
 Or as one can't bear Strauss when his nature  
 is cloven  
 To its deeps within deeps by the stroke of  
 Beethoven;  
 But, set that aside, and 't is truth that I  
 speak,  
 Had Theocritus written in English, not  
 Greek,  
 I believe that his exquisite sense would  
 scarce change a line  
 In that rare, tender, virgin-like pastoral  
 Evangeline.  
 That's not ancient nor modern, its place is  
 apart  
 Where time has no sway, in the realm of  
 pure Art,  
 'T is a shrine of retreat from Earth's  
 hubbub and strife  
 As quiet and chaste as the author's own life.

"There comes Philothea, her face all  
 aglow,  
 She has just been dividing some poor creature's  
 woe,  
 And can't tell which pleases her most, to  
 relieve  
 His want, or his story to hear and believe;  
 No doubt against many deep griefs she  
 prevails,  
 For her ear is the refuge of destitute tales;  
 She knows well that silence is sorrow's best  
 food,  
 And that talking draws off from the heart  
 its black blood,  
 So she'll listen with patience and let you  
 unfold  
 Your bundle of rags as 't were pure cloth  
 of gold,  
 Which, indeed, it all turns to as soon as she's  
 touched it,  
 And (to borrow a phrase from the nursery)  
*muched* it;  
 She has such a musical taste, she will go  
 Any distance to hear one who draws a long  
 bow;  
 She will swallow a wonder by mere might  
 and main,

And thinks it Geometry's fault if she's fain  
 To consider things flat, inasmuch as they're  
 plain;  
 Facts with her are accomplished, as French-  
 men would say —  
 They will prove all she wishes them to  
 either way, —  
 And, as fact lies on this side or that, we  
 must try,  
 If we're seeking the truth, to find where it  
 don't lie;  
 I was telling her once of a marvellous aloe  
 That for thousands of years had looked  
 spindling and fallow,  
 And, though nursed by the fruitfulest  
 powers of mud,  
 Had never vouchsafed e'en so much as a  
 bud,  
 Till its owner remarked (as a sailor, you  
 know,  
 Often will in a calm) that it never would  
 blow,  
 For he wished to exhibit the plant, and de-  
 signed  
 That its blowing should help him in raising  
 the wind;  
 At last it was told him that if he should  
 water  
 Its roots with the blood of his unmarried  
 daughter  
 (Who was born, as her mother, a Calvinist,  
 said,  
 With William Law's serious caul on her  
 head),  
 It would blow as the obstinate breeze did  
 when by a  
 Like decree of her father died Iphigenia;  
 At first he declared he himself would be  
 blowed  
 Ere his conscience with such a foul crime  
 he would load,  
 But the thought, coming oft, grew less dark  
 than before,  
 And he mused, as each creditor knocked at  
 his door,  
 If *this* were but done they would dun me no  
 more;  
 I told Philothea his struggles and doubts,  
 And how he considered the ins and the outs  
 Of the visions he had, and the dreadful  
 dyspepsy,  
 How he went to the seer that lives at Po'-  
 keepsie,  
 How the seer advised him to sleep on it  
 first,

And to read his big volume in case of the  
 worst,  
 And further advised he should pay him five  
 dollars  
 For writing *Gum, Gum*, on his wristbands  
 and collars;  
 Three years and ten days these dark words  
 he had studied  
 When the daughter was missed, and the  
 aloe had budded;  
 I told how he watched it grow large and  
 more large,  
 And wondered how much for the show he  
 should charge, —  
 She had listened with utter indifference to  
 this, till  
 I told how it bloomed, and, discharging its  
 pistil  
 With an aim the Eumenides dictated, shot  
 The botanical flicide dead on the spot;  
 It had blown, but he reaped not his horrible  
 gains,  
 For it blew with such force as to blow out  
 his brains,  
 And the crime was blown also, because on  
 the wad,  
 Which was paper, was writ 'Visitation of  
 God,'  
 As well as a thrilling account of the deed  
 Which the coroner kindly allowed me to  
 read.

"Well, my friend took this story up  
 just, to be sure,  
 As one might a poor foundling that's laid  
 at one's door;  
 She combed it and washed it and clothed it  
 and fed it,  
 And as if 't were her own child most ten-  
 derly bred it,  
 Laid the scene (of the legend, I mean) far  
 away a-  
 mong the green vales underneath Hima-  
 laya,  
 And by artist-like touches, laid on here  
 and there,  
 Made the whole thing so touching, I  
 frankly declare  
 I have read it all thrice, and, perhaps I am  
 weak,  
 But I found every time there were tears on  
 my cheek.

"The pole, science tells us, the magnet  
 controls,

But she is a magnet to emigrant Poles,  
 And folks with a mission that nobody  
 knows  
 Throng thickly about her as bees round a  
 rose;  
 She can fill up the *carets* in such, make  
 their scope  
 Converge to some focus of rational hope,  
 And, with sympathies fresh as the morn-  
 ing, their gall  
 Can transmute into honey, — but this is  
 not all;  
 Not only for those she has solace, oh  
 say,  
 Vice's desperate nursling adrift in Broad-  
 way,  
 Who clingest, with all that is left of thee  
 human,  
 To the last slender spar from the wreck of  
 the woman,  
 Hast thou not found one shore where those  
 tired drooping feet  
 Could reach firm mother-earth, one full  
 heart on whose beat  
 The soothed head in silence reposing could  
 hear  
 The chimes of far childhood throb back on  
 the ear ?  
 Ah, there 's many a beam from the foun-  
 tain of day  
 That, to reach us unclouded, must pass, on  
 its way,  
 Through the soul of a woman, and hers is  
 wide ope  
 To the influence of Heaven as the blue  
 eyes of Hope;  
 Yes, a great heart is hers, one that dares  
 to go in  
 To the prison, the slave-hut, the alleys of  
 sin,  
 And to bring into each, or to find there,  
 some line  
 Of the never completely out-trampled di-  
 vine;  
 If her heart at high floods swamps her  
 brain now and then,  
 'T is but richer for that when the tide ebbs  
 agen,  
 As, after old Nile has subsided, his plain  
 Overflows with a second broad deluge of  
 grain;  
 What a wealth would it bring to the nar-  
 row and sour  
 Could they be as a Child but for one little  
 hour !

"What ! Irving ? thrice welcome, warm  
 heart and fine brain,  
 You bring back the happiest spirit from  
 Spain,  
 And the gravest sweet humor, that ever  
 were there  
 Since Cervantes met death in his gentle  
 despair;  
 Nay, don't be embarrassed, nor look so be-  
 seeching,  
 I sha'n't run directly against my own  
 preaching,  
 And, having just laughed at their Raphaels  
 and Dantes,  
 Go to setting you up beside matchless Cer-  
 vantes;  
 But allow me to speak what I honestly  
 feel, —  
 To a true poet-heart add the fun of Dick  
 Steele,  
 Throw in all of Addison, *minus* the chill,  
 With the whole of that partnership's stock  
 and good-will,  
 Mix well, and while stirring, hum o'er, as  
 a spell,  
 The fine *old* English Gentleman, simmer it  
 well,  
 Sweeten just to your own private liking,  
 then strain,  
 That only the finest and clearest remain,  
 Let it stand out of doors till a soul it re-  
 ceives  
 From the warm lazy sun loitering down  
 through green leaves,  
 And you 'll find a choice nature, not wholly  
 deserving  
 A name either English or Yankee, — just  
 Irving.

"There goes, — but *stet nominis umbra*,  
 — his name  
 You 'll be glad enough, some day or other,  
 to claim,  
 And will all crowd about him and swear  
 that you knew him  
 If some English critic should chance to re-  
 view him.  
 The old *porcos ante ne projiciatis*  
 MARGARITAS, for him you have verified  
 gratis;  
 What matters his name ? Why, it may be  
 Sylvester,  
 Judd, Junior, or Junius, Ulysses, or Nestor,  
 For aught I know or care; 't is enough  
 that I look



On the author of 'Margaret,' the first  
Yankee book  
With the *soul* of Down East in 't, and things  
farther East,  
As far as the threshold of morning, at  
least,  
Where awaits the fair dawn of the simple  
and true,  
Of the day that comes slowly to make all  
things new.  
'T has a smack of pine woods, of bare field  
and bleak hill,  
Such as only the breed of the Mayflower  
could till;  
The Puritan's shown in it, tough to the  
core,  
Such as prayed, smiting Agag on red Mar-  
ston Moor:  
With an unwilling humor, half choked by  
the drouth  
In brown hollows about the inhospitable  
mouth;  
With a soul full of poetry, though it has  
qualms  
About finding a happiness out of the  
Psalms;  
Full of tenderness, too, though it shrinks  
in the dark,  
Hamadryad-like, under the coarse, shaggy  
bark;  
That sees visions, knows wrestlings of God  
with the Will,  
And has its own Sinais and thunderings  
still."

Here, "Forgive me, Apollo," I cried,  
"while I pour  
My heart out to my birthplace: O loved  
more and more  
Dear Baystate, from whose rocky bosom  
thy sons  
Should suck milk, strong-will-giving, brave,  
such as runs  
In the veins of old Greylock — who is it  
that dares  
Call thee pedler, a soul wrapped in bank-  
books and shares?  
It is false! She's a Poet! I see, as I  
write,  
Along the far railroad the steam-snake  
glide white,  
The cataract-throb of her mill-hearts I  
hear,  
The swift strokes of trip-hammers weary  
my ear,

Sledges ring upon anvils, through logs the  
saw screams,  
Blocks swing to their place, beetles drive  
home the beams: —  
It is songs such as these that she croons to  
the din  
Of her fast-flying shuttles, year out and  
year in,  
While from earth's farthest corner there  
comes not a breeze  
But wafts her the buzz of her gold-glean-  
ing bees:  
What though those horn hands have as yet  
found small time  
For painting and sculpture and music and  
rhyme?  
These will come in due order; the need  
that pressed sorest  
Was to vanquish the seasons, the ocean,  
the forest,  
To bridle and harness the rivers, the steam,  
Making those whirl her mill-wheels, this  
tug in her team,  
To vassalize old tyrant Winter, and make  
Him delve surlily for her on river and  
lake; —  
When this New World was parted, she  
strove not to shirk  
Her lot in the heirdom, the tough, silent  
Work,  
The hero-share ever from Herakles down  
To Odin, the Earth's iron sceptre and  
crown:  
Yes, thou dear, noble Mother! if ever  
men's praise  
Could be claimed for creating heroical lays,  
Thou hast won it; if ever the laurel divine  
Crowned the Maker and Builder, that glory  
is thine!  
Thy songs are right epic, they tell how this  
rude  
Rock-rib of our earth here was tamed and  
subdued;  
Thou hast written them plain on the face  
of the planet  
In brave, deathless letters of iron and  
granite;  
Thou hast printed them deep for all time;  
they are set  
From the same runic type-fount and al-  
phabet  
With thy stout Berkshire hills and the  
arms of thy Bay, —  
They are staves from the burly old May-  
flower lay.

If the drones of the Old World, in querulous ease,  
 Ask thy Art and thy Letters, point proudly to these,  
 Or, if they deny these are Letters and Art,  
 Toil on with the same old invincible heart;  
 Thou art rearing the pedestal broad-based and grand  
 Whereon the fair shapes of the Artist shall stand,  
 And creating, through labors undaunted and long,  
 The theme for all Sculpture and Painting and Song!

"But my good mother Baystate wants no praise of mine,  
 She learned from *her* mother a precept divine  
 About something that butters no parsnips, *her forte*  
 In another direction lies, work is *her* sport  
 (Though she'll curtsy and set her cap straight, that she will,  
 If you talk about Plymouth and red Bunker's hill).  
 Dear, notable goodwife! by this time of night,  
 Her hearth is swept neatly, her fire burning bright,  
 And she sits in a chair (of home plan and make) rocking,  
 Musing much, all the while, as she darns on a stocking,  
 Whether turkeys will come pretty high next Thanksgiving,  
 Whether flour'll be so dear, for, as sure as she's living,  
 She will use rye-and-injun then, whether the pig  
 By this time ain't got pretty tolerable big,  
 And whether to sell it outright will be best,  
 Or to smoke hams and shoulders and salt down the rest,—  
 At this minute, she'd swop all my verses, ah, cruel!  
 For the last patent stove that is saving of fuel;  
 So I'll just let Apollo go on, for his phiz  
 Shows I've kept him awaiting too long as it is."

"If our friend, there, who seems a reporter, is done

With his burst of emotion, why, *I* will go on,"  
 Said Apollo; some smiled, and, indeed, I must own  
 There was something sarcastic, perhaps, in his tone;—

"There's Holmes, who is matchless among you for wit;  
 A Leyden-jar always full-charged, from which flit  
 The electrical tingles of hit after hit;  
 In long poems 't is painful sometimes, and invites  
 A thought of the way the new Telegraph writes,  
 Which pricks down its little sharp sentences spitefully  
 As if you got more than you'd title to rightfully,  
 And you find yourself hoping its wild father Lightning  
 Would flame in for a second and give you a fright'ning.  
 He has perfect sway of what I call a sham metre,  
 But many admire it, the English pentameter,  
 And Campbell, I think, wrote most commonly worse,  
 With less nerve, swing, and fire in the same kind of verse,  
 Nor e'er achieved aught in 't so worthy of praise  
 As the tribute of Holmes to the grand *Marseillaise*.  
 You went crazy last year over Bulwer's New Timon;—  
 Why, if B., to the day of his dying, should rhyme on,  
 Heaping verses on verses and tomes upon tomes,  
 He could ne'er reach the best point and vigor of Holmes.  
 His are just the fine hands, too, to weave you a lyric  
 Full of fancy, fun, feeling, or spiced with satire  
 In a measure so kindly, you doubt if the toes  
 That are trodden upon are your own or your foes'.

"There is Lowell, who's striving Parnassus to climb

With a whole bale of *isms* tied together  
 with rhyme,  
 He might get on alone, spite of brambles  
 and boulders,  
 But he can't with that bundle he has on his  
 shoulders,  
 The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh  
 reaching  
 Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing  
 and preaching;  
 His lyre has some chords that would ring  
 pretty well,  
 But he'd rather by half make a drum of  
 the shell,  
 And rattle away till he's old as Methusalem,  
 At the head of a march to the last new  
 Jerusalem.

"There goes Halleck, whose Fanny's a  
 pseudo Don Juan,  
 With the wickedness out that gave salt to  
 the true one,  
 He's a wit, though, I hear, of the very first  
 order,  
 And once made a pun on the words soft  
 Recorder;  
 More than this, he's a very great poet, I'm  
 told,  
 And has had his works published in crimson  
 and gold,  
 With something they call 'Illustrations,'  
 to wit,  
 Like those with which Chapman obscured  
 Holy Writ,<sup>1</sup>  
 Which are said to illustrate, because, as I  
 view it,  
 Like *lucus a non*, they precisely don't do it;  
 Let a man who can write what himself  
 understands  
 Keep clear, if he can, of designing men's  
 hands,  
 Who bury the sense, if there's any worth  
 having,  
 And then very honestly call it engraving.  
 But, to quit *badinage*, which there is n't  
 much wit in,  
 Halleck's better, I doubt not, than all he  
 has written;  
 In his verse a clear glimpse you will fre-  
 quently find,  
 If not of a great, of a fortunate mind,  
 Which contrives to be true to its natural  
 loves

<sup>1</sup> (Cuts rightly called wooden, as all must admit.)

In a world of back-offices, ledgers, and  
 stoves.  
 When his heart breaks away from the  
 brokers and banks,  
 And kneels in his own private shrine to give  
 thanks,  
 There's a genial manliness in him that  
 earns  
 Our sincerest respect (read, for instance,  
 his 'Burns'),  
 And we can't but regret (seek excuse where  
 we may)  
 That so much of a man has been peddled  
 away.

"But what's that? a mass-meeting?  
 No, there come in lots  
 The American Bulwers, Disraelis, and  
 Scotts,  
 And in short the American everything elses,  
 Each charging the others with envies and  
 jealousies;—  
 By the way, 't is a fact that displays what  
 profusions  
 Of all kinds of greatness bless free institu-  
 tions,  
 That while the Old World has produced  
 barely eight  
 Of such poets as all men agree to call great,  
 And of other great characters hardly a  
 score  
 (One might safely say less than that rather  
 than more),  
 With you every year a whole crop is be-  
 gotten,  
 They're as much of a staple as corn is, or  
 cotton;  
 Why, there's scarcely a huddle of log-huts  
 and shanties  
 That has not brought forth its own Miltons  
 and Dantes;  
 I myself know ten Byrons, one Coleridge,  
 three Shelleys,  
 Two Raphaels, six Titians (I think), one  
 Apelles,  
 Leonardos and Rubenses plenty as lichens,  
 One (but that one is plenty) American  
 Dickens,  
 A whole flock of Lambs, any number of  
 Tennysons,—  
 In short, if a man has the luck to have any  
 sons,  
 He may feel pretty certain that one out of  
 twain  
 Will be some very great person over again.

There is one inconvenience in all this, which  
 lies  
 In the fact that by contrast we estimate  
 size,<sup>1</sup>  
 And, where there are none except Titans,  
 great stature  
 Is only the normal proceeding of nature.  
 What puff the strained sails of your praise  
 will you furl at, if  
 The calmest degree that you know is super-  
 lative ?  
 At Rome, all whom Charon took into his  
 wherry must,  
 As a matter of course, be well *issimust* and  
*errimust*,  
 A Greek, too, could feel, while in that fa-  
 mous boat he tost,  
 That his friends would take care he was  
*worst* and *worast*,  
 And formerly we, as through graveyards  
 we past,  
 Thought the world went from bad to worst  
 fearfully fast;  
 Let us glance for a moment, 't is well worth  
 the pains,  
 And note what an average graveyard con-  
 tains;  
 There lie levellers levelled, duns done up  
 themselves,  
 There are booksellers finally laid on their  
 shelves,  
 Horizontally there lie upright politicians,  
 Dose-a-dose with their patients sleep fault-  
 less physicians,  
 There are slave-drivers quietly whipped  
 under ground,  
 There bookbinders, done up in boards, are  
 fast bound,  
 There card-players wait till the last trump  
 be played,  
 There all the choice spirits get finally laid,  
 There the babe that's unborn is supplied  
 with a berth,  
 There men without legs get their six feet  
 of earth,  
 There lawyers repose, each wrapped up in  
 his case,  
 There seekers of office are sure of a place,  
 There defendant and plaintiff get equally  
 cast,  
 There shoemakers quietly stick to the last,

There brokers at length become silent as  
 stocks,  
 There stage-drivers sleep without quitting  
 their box,  
 And so forth and so forth and so forth and  
 so on,  
 With this kind of stuff one might endlessly  
 go on;  
 To come to the point, I may safely assert  
 you  
 Will find in each yard every cardinal vir-  
 tue;<sup>1</sup>  
 Each has six truest patriots: four discov-  
 erers of ether,  
 Who never had thought on 't nor mentioned  
 it either;  
 Ten poets, the greatest who ever wrote  
 rhyme:  
 Two hundred and forty first men of their  
 time:  
 One person whose portrait just gave the  
 least hint  
 Its original had a most horrible squint:  
 One critic, most (what do they call it?) re-  
 flective,  
 Who never had used the phrase ob- or sub-  
 jective:  
 Forty fathers of Freedom, of whom twenty  
 bred  
 Their sons for the rice-swamps, at so much  
 a head,  
 And their daughters for — faugh ! thirty  
 mothers of Gracchi:  
 Non-resistants who gave many a spiritual  
 blackeye:  
 Eight true friends of their kind, one of  
 whom was a jailer:  
 Four captains almost as astounding as  
 Taylor:  
 Two dozen of Italy's exiles who shoot us his  
 Kaisership daily, stern pen-and-ink Bru-  
 tuses,  
 Who, in Yankee back-parlors, with cruci-  
 fied smile,<sup>2</sup>  
 Mount serenely their country's funereal  
 pile:  
 Ninety-nine Irish heroes, ferocious rebel-  
 lers  
 'Gainst the Saxon in cis-marine garrets and  
 cellars,  
 Who shake their dread fists o'er the sea  
 and all that, —

<sup>1</sup> That is in most cases we do, but not all.  
 Past a doubt, there are men who are innately small,  
 Such as Blank, who, without being 'minished a tittle,  
 Might stand for a type of the Absolute Little.

<sup>1</sup> (And at this just conclusion will surely arrive,  
 That the goodness of earth is more dead than alive.)

<sup>2</sup> Not forgetting their tea and their toast, though, the  
 while.



As long as a copper drops into the hat:  
 Nine hundred Teutonic republicans stark  
 From Vaterland's battle just won — in the  
 Park,  
 Who the happy profession of martyrdom  
 take  
 Whenever it gives them a chance at a  
 steak:  
 Sixty-two second Washingtons: two or  
 three Jacksons:  
 And so many everythings-else that it racks  
 one's  
 Poor memory too much to continue the  
 list,  
 Especially now they no longer exist; —  
 I would merely observe that you've taken  
 to giving  
 The puffs that belong to the dead to the  
 living,  
 And that somehow your trump-of-contem-  
 porary-doom's tones  
 Is tuned after old dedications and tomb-  
 stones."

Here the critic came in and a thistle pre-  
 sented —<sup>1</sup>  
 From a frown to a smile the god's features  
 relented,  
 As he stared at his envoy, who, swelling  
 with pride,  
 To the god's asking look, nothing daunted,  
 replied, —  
 "You're surprised, I suppose, I was absent  
 so long,  
 But your godship respecting the lilies was  
 wrong;  
 I hunted the garden from one end to  
 t' other,  
 And got no reward but vexation and bother,  
 Till, tossed out with weeds in a corner to  
 wither,  
 This one lily I found and made haste to  
 bring hither."

"Did he think I had given him a book to  
 review?  
 I ought to have known what the fellow  
 would do,"  
 Muttered Phœbus aside, "for a thistle will  
 pass  
 Beyond doubt for the queen of all flowers  
 with an ass;

<sup>1</sup> Turn back now to page—goodness only knows  
 what,  
 And take a fresh hold on the thread of my plot.

He has chosen in just the same way as he'd  
 choose  
 His specimens out of the books he reviews;  
 And now, as this offers an excellent text,  
 I'll give 'em some brief hints on criticism  
 next."  
 So, musing a moment, he turned to the  
 crowd,  
 And, clearing his voice, spoke as follows  
 aloud: —

"My friends, in the happier days of the  
 muse,  
 We were luckily free from such things as  
 reviews;  
 Then naught came between with its fog to  
 make clearer  
 The heart of the poet to that of his hearer;  
 Then the poet brought heaven to the peo-  
 ple, and they  
 Felt that they, too, were poets in hearing  
 his lay;  
 Then the poet was prophet, the past in his  
 soul  
 Precreated the future, both parts of one  
 whole;  
 Then for him there was nothing too great  
 or too small,  
 For one natural deity sanctified all;  
 Then the bard owned no clipper and meter  
 of moods  
 Save the spirit of silence that hovers and  
 broods  
 O'er the seas and the mountains, the rivers  
 and woods;  
 He asked not earth's verdict, forgetting the  
 clods,  
 His soul soared and sang to an audience of  
 gods;  
 'T was for them that he measured the  
 thought and the line,  
 And shaped for their vision the perfect  
 design,  
 With as glorious a foresight, a balance as  
 true,  
 As swung out the worlds in the infinite blue;  
 Then a glory and greatness invested man's  
 heart,  
 The universal, which now stands estranged  
 and apart,  
 In the free individual moulded, was Art;  
 Then the forms of the Artist seemed  
 thrilled with desire  
 For something as yet unattained, fuller,  
 higher,

As once with her lips, lifted hands, and  
 eyes listening,  
 And her whole upward soul in her counte-  
 nance glistening,  
 Eurydice stood — like a beacon unfired,  
 Which, once touched with flame, will leap  
 heav'nward inspired —  
 And waited with answering kindle to mark  
 The first gleam of Orpheus that pained the  
 red Dark.  
 Then painting, song, sculpture did more  
 than relieve  
 The need that men feel to create and be-  
 lieve,  
 And as, in all beauty, who listens with love  
 Hears these words oft repeated — 'beyond  
 and above,'  
 So these seemed to be but the visible sign  
 Of the grasp of the soul after things more  
 divine;  
 They were ladders the Artist erected to  
 climb  
 O'er the narrow horizon of space and of  
 time,  
 And we see there the footsteps by which  
 men had gained  
 To the one rapturous glimpse of the never-  
 attained,  
 As shepherds could erst sometimes trace in  
 the sod  
 The last spurning print of a sky-cleaving  
 god.

"But now, on the poet's dis-privacied  
 moods  
 With *do this* and *do that* the pert critic  
 intrudes;  
 While he thinks he's been barely fulfilling  
 his duty  
 To interpret 'twixt men and their own sense  
 of beauty,  
 And has striven, while others sought honor  
 or pelf,  
 To make his kind happy as he was him-  
 self,  
 He finds he's been guilty of horrid offences  
 In all kinds of moods, numbers, genders,  
 and tenses;  
 He's been *ob* and *subjective*, what Kettle  
 calls Pot,  
 Precisely, at all events, what he ought not,  
*You have done this*, says one judge; *done*  
*that*, says another;  
*You should have done this*, grumbles one; *that*,  
 says t' other;

Never mind what he touches, one shrieks  
 out *Taboo!*  
 And while he is wondering what he shall do,  
 Since each suggests opposite topics for  
 song,  
 They all shout together *you're right!* and  
*you're wrong!*

"Nature fits all her children with some-  
 thing to do,  
 He who would write and can't write can  
 surely review,  
 Can set up a small booth as critic and sell  
 us his  
 Petty conceit and his pettier jealousies;  
 Thus a lawyer's apprentice, just out of his  
 teens,  
 Will do for the Jeffrey of six magazines;  
 Having read Johnson's lives of the poets  
 half through,  
 There's nothing on earth he's not compe-  
 tent to;  
 He reviews with as much nonchalance as he  
 whistles, —  
 He goes through a book and just picks out  
 the thistles;  
 It matters not whether he blame or com-  
 mend,  
 If he's bad as a foe, he's far worse as a  
 friend:  
 Let an author but write what's above his  
 poor scope,  
 He goes to work gravely and twists up a  
 rope,  
 And, inviting the world to see punishment  
 done,  
 Hangs himself up to bleach in the wind and  
 the sun;  
 'T is delightful to see, when a man comes  
 along  
 Who has anything in him peculiar and  
 strong,  
 Every cockboat that swims clear its fierce  
 (pop) gundeck at him,  
 And make as he passes its ludicrous Peck  
 at him — "

Here Miranda came up and began, "As  
 to that —"  
 Apollo at once seized his gloves, cane, and  
 hat,  
 And, seeing the place getting rapidly  
 cleared,  
 I too snatched my notes and forthwith  
 disappeared.

## THE UNHAPPY LOT OF MR. KNOTT

## PART I

SHOWING HOW HE BUILT HIS HOUSE AND  
HIS WIFE MOVED INTO IT

MY worthy friend, A. Gordon Knott,  
From business snug withdrawn,  
Was much contented with a lot  
That would contain a Tudor cot  
'Twixt twelve feet square of garden-plot,  
And twelve feet more of lawn.

He had laid business on the shelf  
To give his taste expansion,  
And, since no man, retired with pelf,  
The building mania can shun,  
Knott, being middle-aged himself,  
Resolved to build (unhappy elf!)  
A mediæval mansion.

He called an architect in counsel;  
"I want," said he, "a — you know  
what,

(You are a builder, I am Knott,)  
A thing complete from chimney-pot  
Down to the very grounsel;  
Here's a half-acre of good land;  
Just have it nicely mapped and planned  
And make your workmen drive on;  
Meadow there is, and upland too,  
And I should like a water-view,  
D' you think you could contrive one?  
(Perhaps the pump and trough would  
do,

If painted a judicious blue?)  
The woodland I've attended to;"  
[He meant three pines stuck up askew,  
Two dead ones and a live one.]

"A pocket-full of rocks 't would take  
To build a house of freestone,  
But then it is not hard to make  
What nowadays is *the* stone;  
The cunning painter in a trice  
Your house's outside petrifies,  
And people think it very gneiss  
Without inquiring deeper;  
My money never shall be thrown  
Away on such a deal of stone,  
When stone of deal is cheaper."

And so the greenest of antiques

Was reared for Knott to dwell in:  
The architect worked hard for weeks  
In venting all his private peaks  
Upon the roof, whose crop of leaks  
Had satisfied Fluellen;

Whatever anybody had  
Out of the common, good or bad,  
Knott had it all worked well in;  
A donjon-keep, where clothes might dry,  
A porter's lodge that was a sty,  
A campanile slim and high,

Too small to hang a bell in;  
All up and down and here and there,  
With Lord-knows-whats of round and  
square

Stuck on at random everywhere, —  
It was a house to make one stare,  
All corners and all gables;  
Like dogs let loose upon a bear,  
Ten emulous styles *staboyed* with care,  
The whole among them seemed to tear,  
And all the oddities to spare  
Were set upon the stables.

Knott was delighted with a pile  
Approved by fashion's leaders:  
(Only he made the builder smile,  
By asking every little while,  
Why that was called the Twodoor style,  
Which certainly had *three* doors?)  
Yet better for this luckless man  
If he had put a downright ban  
Upon the thing *in limine*;  
For, though to quit affairs his plan,  
Ere many days, poor Knott began  
Perforce accepting draughts, that ran  
All ways — except up chimney;  
The house, though painted stonè to mock,  
With nice white lines round every block,  
Some trepidation stood in,  
When tempests (with petrific shock,  
So to speak,) made it really rock,  
Though not a whit less wooden;  
And painted stone, howe'er well done,  
Will not take in the prodigal sun  
Whose beams are never quite at one  
With our terrestrial lumber;  
So the wood shrank around the knots,

And gaped in disconcerting spots,  
 And there were lots of dots and rots  
 And crannies without number,  
 Wherethrough, as you may well presume,  
 The wind, like water through a flume,  
 Came rushing in ecstatic,  
 Leaving, in all three floors, no room  
 That was not a rheumatic;  
 And, what with points and squares and  
 rounds

Grown shaky on their poises,  
 The house at nights was full of pounds,  
 Thumps, bumps, creaks, scratchings, raps —  
 till — "Zounds!"

Cried Knott, "this goes beyond all bounds;  
 I do not deal in tongues and sounds,  
 Nor have I let my house and grounds  
 To a family of Noyeses!"

But, though Knott's house was full of  
 airs,

He had but one, — a daughter;  
 And, as he owned much stocks and shares,  
 Many who wished to render theirs  
 Such vain, unsatisfying cares,  
 And needed wives to sew their tears,

In matrimony sought her;  
 They vowed her gold they wanted not,  
 Their faith would never falter,  
 They longed to tie this single Knott  
 In the Hymeneal halter;

So daily at the door they rang,  
 Cards for the belle delivering,  
 Or in the choir at her they sang,  
 Achieving such a rapturous twang  
 As set her nerves ashivering.

Now Knott had quite made up his mind  
 That Colonel Jones should have her;  
 No beauty he, but oft we find  
 Sweet kernels 'neath a roughish rind,  
 So hoped his Jenny'd be resigned

And make no more palaver;  
 Glanced at the fact that love was blind,  
 That girls were ratherish inclined  
 To pet their little crosses,  
 Then nosologically defined  
 The rate at which the system pined  
 In those unfortunates who dined  
 Upon that metaphoric kind  
 Of dish — their own proboscis.

But she, with many tears and moans,  
 Besought him not to mock her,  
 Said 't was too much for flesh and bones

To marry mortgages and loans,  
 That fathers' hearts were stocks and stones,  
 And that she'd go, when Mrs. Jones,

To Davy Jones's locker;  
 Then gave her head a little toss  
 That said as plain as ever was,  
 If men are always at a loss

Mere womankind to bridle —  
 To try the thing on woman cross  
 Were fifty times as idle;

For she a strict resolve had made  
 And registered in private,  
 That either she would die a maid,  
 Or else be Mrs. Doctor Slade,

If woman could contrive it;  
 And, though the wedding-day was set,  
 Jenny was more so, rather,  
 Declaring, in a pretty pet,  
 That, howsoe'er they spread their net,  
 She would out-Jennyrall them yet,  
 The colonel and her father.

Just at this time the Public's eyes

Were keenly on the watch, a stir  
 Beginning slowly to arise  
 About those questions and replies,  
 Those raps that unwrapped mysteries

So rapidly at Rochester,  
 And Knott, already nervous grown  
 By lying much awake alone,  
 And listening, sometimes to a moan,

And sometimes to a clatter,  
 Whene'er the wind at night would rouse  
 The gingerbread-work on his house,  
 Or when some hasty-tempered mouse,  
 Behind the plastering, made a towse

About a family matter,  
 Began to wonder if his wife,  
 A paralytic half her life,

Which made it more surprising,  
 Might not to rule him from her urn,  
 Have taken a peripatetic turn  
 For want of exorcising.

This thought, once nestled in his head,  
 Erelong contagious grew, and spread  
 Infecting all his mind with dread,  
 Until at last he lay in bed  
 And heard his wife, with well-known tread,  
 Entering the kitchen through the shed,  
 (Or was 't his fancy, mocking?)  
 Opening the pantry, cutting bread,  
 And then (she'd been some ten years  
 dead)

Closets and drawers unlocking;



Or, in his room (his breath grew thick)  
 He heard the long-familiar click  
 Of slender needles flying quick,  
 As if she knit a stocking;  
 For whom? — he prayed that years might  
 flit

With pains rheumatic shooting,  
 Before those ghostly things she knit  
 Upon his unfleshed sole might fit,  
 He did not fancy it a bit,  
 To stand upon that footing;  
 At other times, his frightened hairs  
 Above the bedclothes trusting,  
 He heard her, full of household cares,  
 (No dream entrapped in supper's snares,  
 The foal of horrible nightmares,  
 But broad awake, as he declares,)  
 Go bustling up and down the stairs,  
 Or setting back last evening's chairs,  
 Or with the poker thrusting  
 The raked-up sea-coal's hardened crust —  
 And — what! impossible! it must!  
 He knew she had returned to dust,  
 And yet could scarce his senses trust,  
 Hearing her as she poked and fussed  
 About the parlor, dusting!

Night after night he strove to sleep  
 And take his ease in spite of it;  
 But still his flesh would chill and creep,  
 And, though two night-lamps he might  
 keep,

He could not so make light of it.  
 At last, quite desperate, he goes  
 And tells his neighbors all his woes,  
 Which did but their amount enchain;  
 They made such mockery of his fears  
 That soon his days were of all jeers,

His nights of the rueful countenance;  
 "I thought most folks," one neighbor  
 said,  
 "Gave up the ghost when they were  
 dead?"

Another gravely shook his head,  
 Adding, "From all we hear, it's  
 Quite plain poor Knott is going mad —  
 For how can he at once be sad

And think he's full of spirits?"  
 A third declared he knew a knife  
 Would cut this Knott much quicker,  
 "The surest way to end all strife,  
 And lay the spirit of a wife,

Is just to take and lick her!"  
 A temperance man caught up the word,  
 "Ah yes," he groaned, "I've always heard

Our poor friend somewhat slanted  
 Tow'rd taking liquor overmuch;  
 I fear these spirits may be Dutch,  
 (A sort of gins, or something such,) —  
 With which his house is haunted;  
 I see the thing as clear as light, —  
 If Knott would give up getting tight,  
 Naught farther would be wanted."  
 So all his neighbors stood aloof  
 And, that the spirits 'neath his roof  
 Were not entirely up to proof,  
 Unanimously granted.

Knott knew that cocks and sprites were  
 foes,  
 And so bought up, Heaven only knows  
 How many, for he wanted crows  
 To give ghosts caws, as I suppose,  
 To think that day was breaking;  
 Moreover what he called his park,  
 He turned into a kind of ark  
 For dogs, because a little bark  
 Is a good tonic in the dark,  
 If one is given to waking;  
 But things went on from bad to worse,  
 His curs were nothing but a curse,  
 And, what was still more shocking,  
 Foul ghosts of living fowl made scoff  
 And would not think of going off  
 In spite of all his cocking.

Shanghais, Bucks-counties, Dominiques,  
 Malays (that did n't lay for weeks,)  
 Polanders, Bantams, Dorkings,  
 (Waiving the cost, no trifling ill,  
 Since each brought in his little bill,)  
 By day or night were never still,  
 But every thought of rest would kill  
 With cacklings and with quorkings;  
 Henry the Eighth of wives got free  
 By a way he had of axing;  
 But poor Knott's Tudor henery  
 Was not so fortunate, and he  
 Still found his trouble waxing;  
 As for the dogs, the rows they made,  
 And how they howled, snarled, barked and  
 bayed,

Beyond all human knowledge is;  
 All night, as wide awake as gnats,  
 The terriers rumpused after rats,  
 Or, just for practice, taught their brats  
 To worry cast-off shoes and hats,  
 The bull-dogs settled private spats,  
 All chased imaginary cats,  
 Or raved behind the fence's slats

At real ones, or, from their mats,  
 With friends, miles off, held pleasant chats,  
 Or, like some folks in white cravats,  
 Contemptuous of sharps and flats,  
     Sat up and sang dogsologies.  
 Meanwhile the cats set up a squall,  
 And, safe upon the garden-wall,  
     All night kept cat-a-walling,  
 As if the feline race were all,  
 In one wild cataleptic sprawl,  
     Into love's tortures falling.

## PART II

SHOWING WHAT IS MEANT BY A FLOW  
OF SPIRITS

At first the ghosts were somewhat shy,  
 Coming when none but Knott was nigh,  
 And people said 't was all their eye,  
 (Or rather his) a flam, the sly

Digestion's machination:

Some recommended a wet sheet,  
 Some a nice broth of pounded peat,  
 Some a cold flat-iron to the feet,  
 Some a decoction of lamb's-bleat,  
 Some a southwesterly grain of wheat;  
 Meat was by some pronounced unmeet,  
 Others thought fish most indiscreet,  
 And that 't was worse than all to eat  
 Of vegetables, sour or sweet,  
 (Except, perhaps, the skin of beet.)

In such a concatenation:

One quack his button gently plucks  
 And murmurs, "Biliary ducks!"

Says Knott, "I never ate one;"

But all, though brimming full of wrath,  
 Homœo, Allo, Hydropath,  
 Concurred in this—that t' other's path

To death's door was the straight one.

Still, spite of medical advice,  
 The ghosts came thicker, and a spice  
 Of mischief grew apparent;

Nor did they only come at night,  
 But seemed to fancy broad daylight,  
 Till Knott, in horror and affright,

His unoffending hair rent;

Whene'er with handkerchief on lap,  
 He made his elbow-chair a trap,  
 To catch an after-dinner nap,  
 The spirits, always on the tap,  
 Would make a sudden *rap, rap, rap*,  
 The half-spun cord of sleep to snap,

(And what is life without its nap  
 But threadbareness and mere mishap?)  
 As 't were with a percussion cap

The trouble's climax capping;  
 It seemed a party dried and grim  
 Of mummies had come to visit him,  
 Each getting off from every limb

Its multitudinous wrapping;  
 Scratchings sometimes the walls ran round,  
 The merest penny-weights of sound;  
 Sometimes 't was only by the pound

They carried on their dealing,  
 A thumping 'neath the parlor floor,  
 Thump-bump-thump-bumping o'er and o'er,  
 As if the vegetables in store  
 (Quiet and orderly before)

Were all together peeling;  
 You would have thought the thing was  
     done

By the spirit of some son of a gun,  
 And that a forty-two-pounder,  
 Or that the ghost which made such sounds  
 Could be none other than John Pounds,  
     Of Ragged Schools the founder.

Through three gradations of affright,  
 The awful noises reached their height;

At first they knocked nocturnally,  
 Then, for some reason, changing quite,  
 (As mourners, after six months' flight,  
 Turn suddenly from dark to light,)

Began to knock diurnally,  
 And last, combining all their stocks,  
 (Scotland was ne'er so full of Knox,)  
 Into one Chaos (father of Nox,)

*Nocte pluit*—they showered knocks,

And knocked, knocked, knocked, eternally;

Ever upon the go, like buoys,  
 (Wooden sea-urchins,) all Knott's joys,  
 They turned to troubles and a noise  
 That preyed on him internally.

Soon they grew wider in their scope;  
 Whenever Knott a door would ope,  
 It would ope not, or else elope  
 And fly back (curbless as a trope  
 Once started down a stanza's slope  
 By a bard that gave it too much rope—)

Like a clap of thunder slamming;  
 And, when kind Jenny brought his hat,  
 (She always, when he walked, did that,)  
 Just as upon his head it sat,  
 Submitting to his settling pat,  
 Some unseen hand would jam it flat,  
 Or give it such a furious bat

That eyes and nose went cramming  
Up out of sight, and consequently,  
As when in life it paddled free,

His beaver caused much damning;  
If these things seem o'erstrained to be,  
Read the account of Doctor Dee,  
'T is in our college library;  
Read Wesley's circumstantial plea,  
And Mrs. Crowe, more like a bee,  
Sucking the nightshade's honeyed fee,  
And Stilling's Pneumatology;  
Consult Scot, Glanvil, grave Wierus,  
and both Mathers; further see,  
Webster, Casaubon, James First's treatise,  
a right royal Q. E. D.

Writ with the moon in perigee,  
Bodin de la Demonomanie —  
(Accent that last line gingerly)  
All full of learning as the sea  
Of fishes, and all disagree,  
Save in *Sathanas apage!*  
Or, what will surely put a flea  
In unbelieving ears — with glee,  
Out of a paper (sent to me  
By some friend who forgot to P...  
A... Y... — I use cryptography  
Lest I his vengeful pen should dree —  
His P...O...S...T...A...G...E...)

Things to the same effect I cut,  
About the tantrums of a ghost,  
Not more than three weeks since, at most,  
Near Stratford, in Connecticut.

Knott's Upas daily spread its roots,  
Sent up on all sides livelier shoots,  
And bore more pestilential fruits;  
The ghosts behaved like downright brutes,  
They snipped holes in his Sunday suits,  
Practised all night on octave flutes,  
Put peas (not peace) into his boots,

Whereof grew corns in season,  
They scotched his sheets, and, what was  
worse,

Stuck his silk nightcap full of burrs,  
Till he, in language plain and terse,  
(But much unlike a Bible verse,)

Swore he should lose his reason.

The tables took to spinning, too,  
Perpetual yarns, and arm-chairs grew

To prophets and apostles;  
One footstool vowed that only he  
Of law and gospel held the key,  
That teachers of whate'er degree  
To whom opinion bows the knee

Were n't fit to teach Truth's *a b c*,  
And were (the whole lot) to a T

Mere fogies all and fossils;

A teapoy, late the property

Of Knox's Aunt Keziah,

(Whom Jenny most irreverently

Had nicknamed her aunt-tipathy)

With tips emphatic claimed to be

The prophet Jeremiah;

The tins upon the kitchen-wall,

Turned tintinnabulators all,

And things that used to come at call

For simple household services

Began to hop and whirl and prance,

Fit to put out of countenance

The *Commis* and *Grisettes* of France

Or Turkey's dancing Dervises.

Of course such doings, far and wide,

With rumors filled the country-side,

And (as it is our nation's pride

To think a Truth not verified

Till with majorities allied)

Parties sprung up, affirmed, denied,

And candidates with questions plied,

Who, like the circus-riders, tried

At once both hobbies to bestride,

And each with his opponent vied

In being inexplicit.

Earnest inquirers multiplied;

Folks, whose tenth cousins lately died,

Wrote letters long, and Knott replied;

All who could either walk or ride

Gathered to wonder or deride,

And paid the house a visit;

Horses were to his pine-trees tied,

Mourners in every corner sighed,

Widows brought children there that cried,

Swarms of lean Seekers, eager-eyed,

(People Knott never could abide,)

Into each hole and cranny pried

With strings of questions cut and dried

From the Devout Inquirer's Guide,

For the wise spirits to decide —

As, for example, is it

True that the damned are fried or boiled ?

Was the Earth's axis greased or oiled ?

Who cleaned the moon when it was soiled ?

How baldness might be cured or foiled ?

How heal diseased potatoes ?

Did spirits have the sense of smell ?

Where would departed spinsters dwell ?

If the late Zenas Smith were well ?

If Earth were solid or a shell ?

Were spirits fond of Doctor Fell?  
 Did the bull toll Cock-Robin's knell?  
 What remedy would bugs expel?  
 If Paine's invention were a sell?  
 Did spirits by Webster's system spell?  
 Was it a sin to be a belle?  
 Did dancing sentence folks to hell?  
 If so, then where most torture fell?  
 On little toes or great toes?  
 If life's true seat were in the brain?  
 Did Ensign mean to marry Jane?  
 By whom, in fact, was Morgan slain?  
 Could matter ever suffer pain?  
 What would take out a cherry-stain?  
 Who picked the pocket of Seth Crane,  
 Of Waldo precinct, State of Maine?  
 Was Sir John Franklin sought in vain?  
 Did primitive Christians ever train?  
 What was the family-name of Cain?  
 Them spoons, were they by Betty ta'en?  
 Would earth-worm poultice cure a sprain?  
 Was Socrates so dreadful plain?  
 What teamster guided Charles's wain?  
 Was Uncle Ethan mad or sane,  
 And could his will in force remain?  
 If not, what counsel to retain?  
 Did Le Sage steal Gil Blas from Spain?  
 Was Junius writ by Thomas Paine?  
 Were ducks discomforted by rain?  
 How did Britannia rule the main?  
 Was Jonas coming back again?  
 Was vital truth upon the wane?  
 Did ghosts, to scarce folks, drag a chain?  
 Who was our Huldah's chosen swain?  
 Did none have teeth pulled without payin',  
 Ere ether was invented?  
 Whether mankind would not agree,  
 If the universe were tuned in C?  
 What was it ailed Lucindy's knee?  
 Whether folks eat folks in Feejee?  
 Whether *his* name would end with T?  
 If Saturn's rings were two or three,  
 And what bump in Phrenology  
 They truly represented?  
 These problems dark, wherein they groped,  
 Wherewith man's reason vainly coped,  
 Now that the spirit-world was oped,  
 In all humility they hoped  
 Would be resolved *instantly*;  
 Each of the miscellaneous rout  
 Brought his, or her, own little doubt,  
 And wished to pump the spirits out,  
 Through his or her own private spout,  
 Into his or her decanter.

## PART III

WHEREIN IT IS SHOWN THAT THE MOST  
 ARDENT SPIRITS ARE MORE ORNA-  
 MENTAL THAN USEFUL

Many a speculating wight  
 Came by express-trains, day and night,  
 To see if Knott would "sell his right,"  
 Meaning to make the ghosts a sight —  
 What they call a "meenaygerie;"  
 One threatened, if he would not "trade,"  
 His run of custom to invade,  
 (He could not these sharp folks persuade  
 That he was not, in some way, paid.)  
 And stamp him as a plagiary,  
 By coming down, at one fell swoop,  
 With THE ORIGINAL KNOCKING TROUPE,  
 Come recently from Hades,  
 Who (for a quarter-dollar heard)  
 Would ne'er rap out a hasty word  
 Whence any blame might be incurred  
 From the most fastidious ladies;  
 The late lamented Jesse Soule,  
 To stir the ghosts up with a pole  
 And be director of the whole,  
 Who was engaged the rather  
 For the rare merits he'd combine,  
 Having been in the spirit line,  
 Which trade he only did resign,  
 With general applause, to shine,  
 Awful in mail of cotton fine,  
 As ghost of Hamlet's father!  
 Another a fair plan reveals  
 Never yet hit on, which, he feels,  
 To Knott's religious sense appeals —  
 "We'll have your house set up on wheels,  
 A speculation pious;  
 For music, we can shortly find  
 A barrel-organ that will grind  
 Psalm-tunes — an instrument designed  
 For the New England tour — refined  
 From secular drosses, and inclined  
 To an unworldly turn, (combined  
 With no sectarian bias;)   
 Then, travelling by stages slow,  
 Under the style of Knott & Co.,  
 I would accompany the show  
 As moral lecturer, the foe  
 Of Rationalism; while you could throw  
 The rappings in, and make them go  
 Strict Puritan principles, you know,  
 (How do you make 'em? with your toe?)



And the receipts which thence might  
flow,

We could divide between us;  
Still more attractions to combine,  
Beside these services of mine,  
I will throw in a very fine  
(It would do nicely for a sign)

Original Titian's Venus."  
Another offered handsome fees  
If Knott would get Demosthenes  
(Nay, his mere knuckles, for more ease)  
To rap a few short sentences;  
Or if, for want of proper keys,

His Greek might make confusion,  
Then just to get a rap from Burke,  
To recommend a little work

On Public Elocution.  
Meanwhile, the spirits made replies  
To all the reverent *whats* and *whys*,  
Resolving doubts of every size,  
And giving seekers grave and wise,  
Who came to know their destinies,

A rap-turous reception;  
When unbelievers void of grace  
Came to investigate the place,  
(Creatures of Sadducistic race,  
With grovelling intellects and base,)  
They could not find the slightest trace

To indicate deception;  
Indeed, it is declared by some  
That spirits (of this sort) are glum,  
Almost, or wholly, deaf and dumb,  
And (out of self-respect) quite mum  
To skeptic natures cold and numb,  
Who of *this* kind of Kingdom Come

Have not a just conception:  
True, there were people who demurred  
That, though the raps no doubt were heard

Both under them and o'er them,  
Yet, somehow, when a search they made,  
They found Miss Jenny sore afraid,  
Or Jenny's lover, Doctor Slade,  
Equally awestruck and dismayed,  
Or Deborah, the chambermaid,  
Whose terrors not to be gainsaid  
In laughs hysteric were displayed,

Was always there before them;  
This had its due effect with some  
Who straight departed, muttering, Hum!

Transparent hoax! and Gammon!  
But these were few: believing souls,  
Came, day by day, in larger shoals,  
As the ancients to the windy holes  
'Neath Delphi's tripod brought their doles,  
Or to the shrine of Ammon.

The spirits seemed exceeding tame,  
Call whom you fancied, and he came;  
The shades august of eldest fame

You summoned with an awful ease;  
As grosser spirits gurgled out  
From chair and table with a spout,  
In Auerbach's cellar once, to flout  
The senses of the rabble rout,  
Where'er the gimlet twirled about  
Of cunning Mephistopheles,

So did these spirits seem in store,  
Behind the wainscot or the door,  
Ready to thrill the being's core  
Of every enterprising bore

With their astounding glamour;  
Whatever ghost one wished to hear,  
By strange coincidence, was near  
To make the past or future clear

(Sometimes in shocking grammar)  
By raps and taps, now there, now here —  
It seemed as if the spirit queer  
Of some departed auctioneer  
Were doomed to practise by the year

With the spirit of his hammer:  
Whate'er you asked was answered, yet  
One could not very deeply get  
Into the obliging spirits' debt,  
Because they used the alphabet

In all communications,  
And new revealings (though sublime)  
Rapped out, one letter at a time,

With boggles, hesitations,  
Stoppings, beginnings o'er again,  
And getting matters into train,  
Could hardly overload the brain

With too excessive rations,  
Since just to ask *if two and two*  
*Really make four?* or, *How d' ye do?*  
And get the fit replies thereto  
In the tramundane rat-tat-too,  
Might ask a whole day's patience.

'T was strange ('mongst other things) to  
find

In what odd sets the ghosts combined,

Happy forthwith to thump any  
Piece of intelligence inspired,  
The truth whereof had been inquired

By some one of the company;  
For instance, Fielding, Mirabeau,  
Orator Henley, Cicero,  
Paley, John Ziska, Marivaux,  
Melancthon, Robertson, Junot,  
Scaliger, Chesterfield, Rousseau,  
Hakluyt, Boccaccio, South, De Foe,

Diaz, Josephus, Richard Roe,  
 Odin, Arminius, Charles *le gros*,  
 Tiresias, the late James Crow,  
 Casabianca, Grose, Prideaux,  
 Old Grimes, Young Norval, Swift, Brissot,  
 Maimonides, the Chevalier D'O,  
 Socrates, Fénelon, Job, Stow,  
 The inventor of *Elixir pro*,  
 Euripides, Spinoza, Poe,  
 Confucius, Hiram Smith, and Fo,  
 Came (as it seemed, somewhat *de trop*)  
 With a disembodied Esquimaux,  
 To say that it was so and so,

With Franklin's expedition;  
 One testified to ice and snow,  
 One that the mercury was low,  
 One that his progress was quite slow,  
 One that he much desired to go,  
 One that the cook had frozen his toe,  
 (Dissented from by Dandolo,  
 Wordsworth, Cynaegirus, Boileau,  
 La Hontan, and Sir Thomas Roe,)  
 One saw twelve white bears in a row,  
 One saw eleven and a crow,  
 With other things we could not know  
 (Of great statistic value, though,)

By our mere mortal vision.

Sometimes the spirits made mistakes,  
 And seemed to play at ducks and drakes  
 With bold inquiry's heaviest stakes

In science or in mystery;  
 They knew so little (and that wrong)  
 Yet rapped it out so bold and strong,  
 One would have said the unnumbered  
 throng

Had been Professors of History;  
 What made it odder was, that those  
 Who, you would naturally suppose,  
 Could solve a question, if they chose,  
 As easily as count their toes,

Were just the ones that blundered;  
 One day, Ulysses happening down,  
 A reader of Sir Thomas Browne

And who (with him) had wondered  
 What song it was the Sirens sang,  
 Asked the shrewd Ithacan — *bang! bang!*  
 With this response the chamber rang,  
 "I guess it was Old Hundred."

And Franklin, being asked to name  
 The reason why the lightning came,  
 Replied, "Because it thundered."

On one sole point the ghosts agreed,  
 One fearful point, than which, indeed,

Nothing could seem absurder;  
 Poor Colonel Jones they all abused  
 And finally downright accused

The poor old man of murder;  
 'T was thus; by dreadful raps was shown  
 Some spirit's longing to make known  
 A bloody fact, which he alone  
 Was privy to, (such ghosts more prone  
 In Earth's affairs to meddle are;)

Who are you? with awe-stricken looks,  
 All ask: his airy knuckles he crooks,  
 And raps, "I was Eliab Snooks,  
 That used to be a pedler;  
 Some on ye still are on my books!"  
 Whereat, to inconspicuous nooks;  
 (More fearing this than common spooks,)

Shrank each indebted meddler;  
 Further the vengeful ghost declared  
 That while his earthly life was spared,  
 About the country he had fared,  
 A duly licensed follower  
 Of that much - wandering trade that  
 wins

Slow profit from the sale of tins

And various kinds of hollow-ware;  
 That Colonel Jones enticed him in,  
 Pretending that he wanted tin,  
 There slew him with a rolling-pin,  
 Hid him in a potato-bin,

And (the same night) him ferried  
 Across Great Pond to t' other shore,  
 And there, on land of Widow Moore,  
 Just where you turn to Larkin's store,

Under a rock him buried;  
 Some friends (who happened to be by)  
 He called upon to testify  
 That what he said was not a lie,

And that he did not stir this  
 Foul matter, out of any spite  
 But from a simple love of right;—

Which statements the Nine Worthies,  
 Rabbi Akiba, Charlemagne,  
 Seth, Colley Cibber, General Wayne,  
 Cambyases, Tasso, Tubal-Cain,  
 The owner of a castle in Spain,  
 Jehanghire, and the Widow of Nain,  
 (The friends aforesaid,) made more plain

And by loud raps attested;  
 To the same purport testified  
 Plato, John Wilkes, and Colonel Pride  
 Who knew said Snooks before he died,  
 Had in his wares invested,  
 Thought him entitled to belief  
 And freely could concur, in brief,

In everything the rest did.

Eliab this occasion seized,  
 (Distinctly here the spirit sneezed,)
 To say that he should ne'er be eased
 Till Jenny married whom she pleased,  
 Free from all checks and urgin's,  
 (This spirit dropt his final g's)  
 And that, unless Knott quickly sees  
 This done, the spirits to appease,  
 They would come back his life to tease,  
 As thick as mites in ancient cheese,  
 And let his house on an endless lease  
 To the ghosts (terrific rappers these  
 And veritable Eumenides)  
 Of the Eleven Thousand Virgins!

Knott was perplexed and shook his head,  
 He did not wish his child to wed

With a suspected murderer,  
 (For, true or false, the rumor spread,)
 But as for this roiled life he led,  
 "It would not answer," so he said,  
 "To have it go no furtherer."

At last, scarce knowing what it meant,  
 Reluctantly he gave consent  
 That Jenny, since 't was evident  
 That she *would* follow her own bent,  
 Should make her own election;  
 For that appeared the only way  
 These frightful noises to allay  
 Which had already turned him gray  
 And plunged him in dejection.

Accordingly, this artless maid  
 Her father's ordinance obeyed,  
 And, all in whitest crape arrayed,  
 (Miss Pulsifer the dresses made  
 And wishes here the fact displayed  
 That she still carries on the trade,  
 The third door south from Bagg's Arcade,)
 A very faint "I do" essayed  
 And gave her hand to Hiram Slade,  
 From which time forth, the ghosts were  
 laid,

And ne'er gave trouble after;  
 But the Selectmen, be it known,  
 Dug underneath the aforesaid stone,  
 Where the poor pedler's corpse was  
 thrown,

And found thereunder a jaw-bone,  
 Though, when the crowner sat thereon,  
 He nothing hatched, except alone  
 Successive broods of laughter;  
 It was a frail and dingy thing,  
 In which a grinder or two did cling,

In color like molasses,  
 Which surgeons, called from far and wide,  
 Upon the horror to decide,  
 Having put on their glasses,  
 Reported thus: "To judge by looks,  
 These bones, by some queer hooks or  
 crooks,

May have belonged to Mr. Snooks,  
 But, as men deepest-read in books  
 Are perfectly aware, bones,  
 If buried fifty years or so,  
 Lose their identity and grow  
 From human bones to bare bones."

Still, if to Jaalam you go down,  
 You'll find two parties in the town,  
 One headed by Benaiah Brown,  
 And one by Perez Tinkham;  
 The first believe the ghosts all through  
 And vow that they shall never rue  
 The happy chance by which they knew  
 That people in Jupiter are blue,  
 And very fond of Irish stew,  
 Two curious facts which Prince Lee Boo  
 Rapped clearly to a chosen few—

Whereas the others think 'em  
 A trick got up by Doctor Slade  
 With Deborah the chambermaid  
 And that sly cretur Jinny.  
 That all the revelations wise,  
 At which the Brownites made big eyes,  
 Might have been given by Jared Keyes,  
 A natural fool and ninny,  
 And, last week, did n't Eliab Snooks  
 Come back with never better looks,  
 As sharp as new-bought mackerel hooks,

And bright as a new pin, eh?  
 Good Parson Wilbur, too, avers  
 (Though to be mixed in parish stirs  
 Is worse than handling chestnut-burrs)  
 That no case to his mind occurs  
 Where spirits ever did converse,  
 Save in a kind of guttural Erse,  
 (So say the best authorities;)

And that a charge by raps conveyed  
 Should be most scrupulously weighed  
 And searched into, before it is  
 Made public, since it may give pain  
 That cannot soon be cured again,  
 And one word may infix a stain

Which ten cannot gloss over,  
 Though speaking for his private part,  
 He is rejoiced with all his heart  
 Miss Knott missed not her lover.

## FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED POEM

IN the note introducing *Fitz Adam's Story*, *infra* p. 411, will be found a brief account of the unfinished poem of which this is a fragment.

I AM a man of forty, sirs, a native of East  
Haddam,  
And have some reason to surmise that I  
descend from Adam;  
But what's my pedigree to you? That I  
will soon unravel;  
I've sucked my Haddam-Eden dry, there-  
fore desire to travel,  
And, as a natural consequence, presume I  
need n't say,  
I wish to write some letters home and have  
those letters p—  
[I spare the word suggestive of those grim  
Next Morns that mount  
*Clump, Clump*, the stairways of the brain  
with — "*Sir, my small account*,"  
And, after every good we gain — Love,  
Fame, Wealth, Wisdom — still,  
As punctual as a cuckoo clock, hold up their  
little bill,  
The *garçons* in our Café of Life, by dream-  
ing us forgot —  
Sitting, like Homer's heroes, full and mus-  
ing God knows what, —  
Till they say, bowing, *S'il vous plait, voila,*  
*Messieurs, la note!*]  
I would not hint at this so soon, but in our  
callous day,  
The tollman Debt, who drops his bar across  
the world's highway,  
Great Cæsar in mid-march would stop, if  
Cæsar could not pay;  
Pilgriming's dearer than it was: men  
cannot travel now  
Scot-free from Dan to Beersheba upon a  
simple vow;  
Nay, as long back as Bess's time, when  
Walsingham went over  
Ambassador to Cousin France, at Canter-  
bury and Dover  
He was so fleeced by innkeepers that, ere  
he quitted land,  
He wrote to the Prime Minister to take the  
knaves in hand.  
If I with staff and scallop-shell should try  
my way to win,  
Would Bonifaces quarrel as to who should  
take me in?

Or would my pilgrim's progress end where  
Bunyan started his on,  
And my grand tour be round and round the  
backyard of a prison?  
I give you here a saying deep and therefore,  
haply true;  
'T is out of Merlin's prophecies, but quite  
as good as new:  
The question booth for men and meates longe  
bohages yt beginne  
Thee in a noteshell, rather sahe thee in a case  
of tinne.  
But, though men may not travel now, as in  
the Middle Ages,  
With self-sustaining retinues of little gilt-  
edged pages,  
Yet one may manage pleasantly, where'er  
he likes to roam,  
By sending his small pages (at so much per  
small page) home;  
And if a staff and scallop-shell won't serve  
so well as then,  
Our outlay is about as small — just paper,  
ink, and pen.  
Be thankful! Humbugs never die, more  
than the wandering Jew;  
Bankrupt, they publish their own deaths,  
slink for a while from view,  
Then take an *alias*, change the sign, and the  
old trade renew;  
Indeed, 't is wondrous how each Age,  
though laughing at the Past,  
Insists on having its tight shoe made on the  
same old last;  
How it is sure its system would break up  
at once without  
The bunion which it *will* believe hereditary  
gout;  
How it takes all its swans for geese, nay,  
stranger yet and sadder,  
Sees in its treadmill's fruitless jog a heaven-  
ward Jacob's-ladder,  
Shouts, *Lo, the Shining Heights are reached!*  
*One moment more aspire!*  
Trots into cramps its poor, dear legs, gets  
never an inch the higher,  
And like the others, ends with pipe and  
mug beside the fire.



There, 'tween each doze, it whiffs and sips  
and watches with a sneer  
The green recruits that trudge and sweat  
where it had swinked whilere,  
And sighs to think this soon spent zeal  
should be in simple truth  
The only interval between old Foghood  
and Youth:

"Well," thus it muses, "well, what odds ?

'T is not for us to warn;

'T will be the same when we are dead, and  
was ere we were born;

Without the Treadmill, too, how grind our  
store of winter's corn ?

Had we no stock, nor twelve per cent. re-  
ceived from Treadmill shares,

We might . . . but these poor devils at  
last will get our easy-chairs.

High aims and hopes have great rewards,  
they, too, serene and snug,

Shall one day have their soothing pipe and  
their enlivening mug;

From Adam, empty-handed Youth hath  
always heard the hum

Of Good Times Coming, and will hear un-  
til the last day come;

Young ears hear forward, old ones back,  
and, while the earth rolls on,

Full-handed Eld shall hear recede the steps  
of Good Times Gone;

Ah what a cackle we set up whene'er an  
egg was laid !

*Cack-cack-cack-cackle !* rang around, the  
scratch for worms was stayed,

*Cut-cut-ca-dah-cut !* from *this* egg the com-  
ing cock shall stalk !

The great New Era dawns, the age of  
Deeds and not of Talk !

And every stupid hen of us hugged close  
his egg of chalk,

Thought,—sure, I feel life stir within,  
each day with greater strength,

When lo, the chick ! from former chicks  
he differed not a jot,

But grew and crew and scratched and  
went, like those before, to pot !

So muse the dim *Emeriti*, and, mournful  
though it be,

I must confess a kindred thought hath  
sometimes come to me,

Who, though but just of forty turned, have  
heard the rumor of fame

Of nine and ninety Coming Men, all—  
coming till they came.

Pure Mephistopheles all this ? the vulgar  
nature jeers ?

Good friend, while I was writing it, my  
eyes were dim with tears;

Thrice happy he who cannot see, or who  
his eyes can shut,

Life's deepest sorrow is contained in that  
small word there — But !

We're pretty nearly crazy here with  
change and go ahead,

With flinging our caught bird away for  
two i' th' bush instead,

With butting 'gainst the wall which we  
declare *shall* be a portal,

And questioning Deeps that never yet have  
oped their lips to mortal;

We're growing pale and hollow-eyed, and  
out of all condition,

With *mediums* and prophetic chairs, and  
crickets with a mission,

(The most astounding oracles since Ba-  
laam's donkey spoke, —

'T would seem our furniture was all of  
Dodonean oak.)

Make but the public laugh, be sure 't will  
take you to be somebody;

'T will wrench its button from your clutch,  
my densely earnest glum body;

'T is good, this noble earnestness, good in  
its place, but why

Make great Achilles' shield the pan to  
bake a penny pie ?

Why, when we have a kitchen-range, insist  
that we shall stop,

And bore clear down to central fires to  
broil our daily chop ?

Excalibur and Durandart are swords of  
price, but then

Why draw them sternly when you wish to  
trim your nails or pen ?

Small gulf between the ape and man; you  
bridge it with your staff;

But it will be impassable until the ape can  
laugh; —

No, no, be common now and then, be sen-  
sible, be funny,

And, as Siberians bait their traps for bears  
with pots of honey,

From which ere they'll withdraw their  
snouts, they'll suffer many a club-  
lick,

So bait your moral figure-of-fours to catch  
the Orson public.

Look how the dead leaves melt their way  
 down through deep-drifted snow;  
 They take the sun-warmth down with them  
 — pearls could not conquer so;  
 There is a moral here, you see; if you  
 would preach, you must  
 Steep all your truths in sunshine would  
 you have them pierce the crust;  
 Brave Jeremiah, you are grand and ter-  
 rible, a sign  
 And wonder, but were never quite a popu-  
 lar divine;  
 Fancy the figure you would cut among the  
 nuts and wine!  
 I, on occasion, too, could preach, but hold  
 it wiser far  
 To give the public sermons it will take with  
 its cigar,  
 And morals fugitive, and vague as are  
 these smoke-wreaths light  
 In which . . . I trace . . . a . . . let me  
 see — bless me! 't is out of sight.  
 . . . . .  
 There are some goodish things at sea; for  
 instance, one can feel  
 A grandeur in the silent man forever at the  
 wheel,  
 That bit of two-legged intellect, that par-  
 ticle of drill,  
 Who the huge floundering hulk inspires with  
 reason, brain, and will,  
 And makes the ship, though skies are black  
 and headwinds whistle loud,  
 Obey her conscience there which feels the  
 loadstar through the cloud;  
 And when by lusty western gales the full-  
 sailed barque is hurled,  
 Towards the great moon which, setting on  
 the silent underworld,  
 Rounds luridly up to look on ours, and  
 shoots a broadening line,  
 Of palpitant light from crest to crest across  
 the ridgy brine,  
 Then from the bows look back and feel a  
 thrill that never stales,  
 In that full-bosomed, swan-white pomp of  
 onward-yearning sails;  
 Ah, when dear cousin Bull laments that  
 you can't make a poem,  
 Take him aboard a clipper-ship, young  
 Jonathan, and show him  
 A work of art that in its grace and grandeur  
 may compare  
 With any thing that any race has fashioned  
 any where;

'T is not a statue, grumbles John; nay, if  
 you come to that,  
 We think of Hyde Park Corner, and con-  
 cede you beat us flat  
 With your equestrian statue to a Nose and  
 a Cocked hat;  
 But 't is not a cathedral; well, e'en that we  
 will allow,  
 Both statues and cathedrals are anachro-  
 nistic now;  
 Your minsters, coz, the monuments of men  
 who conquered you,  
 You 'd sell a bargain, if we 'd take the deans  
 and chapters too;  
 No; mortal men build nowadays, as always  
 heretofore,  
 Good temples to the gods which they in  
 very truth adore;  
 The shepherds of this Broker Age, with all  
 their willing flocks,  
 Although they bow to stones no more, do  
 bend the knee to stocks,  
 And churches can't be beautiful though  
 crowded, floor and gallery,  
 If people worship preacher, and if preacher  
 worship salary;  
 'T is well to look things in the face, the god  
 o' the modern universe,  
 Hermes, cares naught for halls of art and  
 libraries of puny verse,  
 If they don't sell, he notes them thus upon  
 his ledger — say, *per*  
*Contra* to a loss of so much stone, best  
 Russia duck and paper;  
 And, after all, about this Art men talk a  
 deal of fudge,  
 Each nation has its path marked out, from  
 which it must not budge;  
 The Romans had as little art as Noah in his  
 ark,  
 Yet somehow on this globe contrived to  
 make an epic mark;  
 Religion, painting, sculpture, song — for  
 these they ran up jolly ticks  
 With Greece and Egypt, but they were great  
 artists in their politics,  
 And if we make no minsters, John, nor  
 epics, yet the Fates  
 Are not entirely deaf to men who *can* build  
 ships and states;  
 The arts are never pioneers, but men have  
 strength and health  
 Who, called on suddenly, can improvise a  
 commonwealth,

Nay, can more easily go on and frame them  
by the dozen,  
Than you can make a dinner-speech, dear  
sympathizing cousin:  
And, though our restless Jonathan have not  
your graver bent, sure he  
Does represent this hand-to-mouth, pert,  
rapid, nineteenth century;  
This is the Age of Scramble; men move  
faster than they did  
When they pried up the imperial Past's  
deep-dusted coffin-lid,  
Searching for scrolls of precedent; the wire-  
leashed lightning now  
Replaces Delphos — men don't leave the  
steamer for the scow;  
What public, were they new to-day, would  
ever stop to read  
The Iliad, the Shanameh, or the Nibelun-  
genlied?

Their public's gone, the artist Greek, the  
lettered Shah, the hairy Graf —  
Folio and plesiosaur sleep well; *we* weary  
o'er a paragraph;  
The mind moves planet-like no more, it  
fizzes, cracks, and bustles;  
From end to end with journals dry the land  
o'ershadowed rustles,  
As with dead leaves a winter-beech, and,  
with their breath-roused jars  
Amused, we care not if they hide the eternal  
skies and stars;  
Down to the general level of the Board of  
Brokers sinking,  
The Age takes in the newspapers, or, to say  
sooth unshrinking,  
The newspapers take in the Age, and  
stocks do all the thinking.

## AN ORIENTAL APOLOGUE

SOMEWHERE in India, upon a time,  
(Read it not Injah, or you spoil the verse,)  
There dwelt two saints whose privilege  
sublime  
It was to sit and watch the world grow  
worse,  
Their only care (in that delicious clime)  
At proper intervals to pray and curse;  
Pracrit the dialect each prudent brother  
Used for himself, Damnonian for the  
other.

One half the time of each was spent in  
praying  
For blessings on his own unworthy head,  
The other half in fearfully portraying  
Where certain folks would go when they  
were dead;  
This system of exchanges — there's no  
saying  
To what more solid barter 't would have led,  
But that a river, vext with boils and  
swellings  
At rainy times, kept peace between their  
dwellings.

So they two played at wordy battledore  
And kept a curse forever in the air,  
Flying this way or that from shore to  
shore;

Nor other labor did this holy pair,  
Clothed and supported from the lavish  
store  
Which crowds lanigerous brought with  
daily care;  
They toiled not, neither did they spin;  
their bias  
Was tow'rd the harder task of being  
pious.  
Each from his hut rushed six score times  
a day,  
Like a great canon of the Church full-  
rammed  
With cartridge theologic, (so to say,)  
Touched himself off, and then, recoiling,  
slammed  
His hovel's door behind him in a way  
That to his foe said plainly, — *you'll* be  
damned;  
And so like Potts and Wainwright, shrill  
and strong  
The two D——D'd each other all day  
long.

One was a dancing Dervise, a Moham-  
medan,  
The other was a Hindoo, a gymnosophist;  
One kept his whatd'yecallit and his Ram-  
adan,

Laughing to scorn the sacred rites and laws  
 of his  
 Transfluvial rival, who, in turn, called  
 Ahmed an  
 Old top, and, as a clincher, shook across a  
 fist  
 With nails six inches long, yet lifted  
 not  
 His eyes from off his navel's mystic knot.

"Who whirls not round six thousand  
 times an hour  
 Will go," screamed Ahmed, "to the evil  
 place;  
 May he eat dirt, and may the dog and  
 Giaour  
 Defile the graves of him and all his race;  
 Allah loves faithful souls and gives them  
 power  
 To spin till they are purple in the face;  
 Some folks get you know what, but he  
 that pure is  
 Earns Paradise and ninety thousand hou-  
 riers."

"Upon the silver mountain, South by  
 East,  
 Sits Brahma fed upon the sacred bean;  
 He loves those men whose nails are still  
 increased,  
 Who all their lives keep ugly, foul, and  
 lean;  
 'Tis of his grace that not a bird or beast  
 Adorned with claws like mine was ever  
 seen;  
 The suns and stars are Brahma's  
 thoughts divine,  
 Even as these trees I seem to see are  
 mine."

"Thou seem'st to see, indeed!" roared  
 Ahmed back;  
 "Were I but once across this plaguy  
 stream,  
 With a stout sapling in my hand, one  
 whack  
 On those lank ribs would rid thee of that  
 dream!  
 Thy Brahma-blasphemy is ipecac  
 To my soul's stomach; couldst thou grasp  
 the scheme  
 Of true redemption, thou wouldst know  
 that Deity  
 Whirls by a kind of blessed spontaneity.

"And this it is which keeps our earth  
 here going  
 With all the stars." — "Oh, vile! but  
 there's a place  
 Prepared for such; to think of Brahma  
 throwing  
 Worlds like a juggler's balls up into Space!  
 Why, not so much as a smooth lotos  
 blowing  
 Is e'er allowed that silence to efface  
 Which broods round Brahma, and our  
 earth, 't is known,  
 Rests on a tortoise, moveless as this  
 stone."

So they kept up their banning amœbæan,  
 When suddenly came floating down the  
 stream  
 A youth whose face like an incarnate  
 pæan  
 Glowed, 't was so full of grandeur and of  
 gleam;  
 "If there *be* gods, then, doubtless, this  
 must be one,"  
 Thought both at once, and then began to  
 scream,  
 "Surely, whate'er immortals know, thou  
 knowest,  
 Decide between us twain before thou  
 goest!"

The youth was drifting in a slim canoe  
 Most like a huge white water-lily's petal,  
 But neither of our theologians knew  
 Whereof 't was made; whether of heav-  
 enly metal  
 Seldseen, or of a vast pearl split in two  
 And hollowed, was a point they could not  
 settle;  
 'T was good debate-seed, though, and  
 bore large fruit  
 In after years of many a tart dispute.

There were no wings upon the stranger's  
 shoulders,  
 And yet he seemed so capable of rising  
 That, had he soared like thistledown,  
 beholders  
 Had thought the circumstance noways sur-  
 prising;  
 Enough that he remained, and, when the  
 scolders  
 Hailed him as umpire in their vocal prize-  
 ring,



The painter of his boat he lightly threw  
Around a lotos-stem, and brought her to.

The strange youth had a look as if he  
might  
Have trod far planets where the atmosphere  
(Of nobler temper) steeps the face with  
light,  
Just as our skins are tanned and freckled  
here;  
His air was that of a cosmopolite  
In the wide universe from sphere to sphere;  
Perhaps he was (his face had such grave  
beauty)  
An officer of Saturn's guards off duty.

Both saints began to unfold their tales at  
once,  
Both wished their tales, like simial ones,  
prehensile,  
That they might seize his ear; *fool!*  
*knave!* and *dunce!*  
Flew zigzag back and forth, like strokes of  
pencil  
In a child's fingers; voluble as duns,  
They jabbered like the stones on that  
immense hill  
In the Arabian Nights; until the stranger  
Began to think his ear-drums in some  
danger.

In general those who nothing have to say  
Contrive to spend the longest time in doing  
it;  
They turn and vary it in every way,  
Hashing it, stewing it, mincing it, *ragouting*  
it;  
Sometimes they keep it purposely at bay,  
Then let it slip to be again pursuing it;  
They drone it, groan it, whisper it and  
shout it,  
Refute it, flout it, swear to't, prove it,  
doubt it.

Our saints had practised for some thirty  
years;  
Their talk, beginning with a single stem,  
Spread like a banyan, sending down live  
piers,  
Colonies of digression, and, in them,  
Germs of yet new dispersion; once by the  
ears,  
They could convey damnation in a hem,  
And blow the pinch of premise-priming off  
Long syllogistic batteries, with a cough.

Each had a theory that the human ear  
A providential tunnel was, which led  
To a huge vacuum (and surely here  
They showed some knowledge of the gen-  
eral head.)

For cant to be decanted through, a mere  
Auricular canal or mill-race fed  
All day and night, in sunshine and in  
shower,  
From their vast heads of milk-and-water-  
power.

The present being a peculiar case,  
Each with unwonted zeal the other scouted,  
Put his spurred hobby through its every  
pace,  
Pished, pshawed, poohed, horribled, bahed,  
jeered, sneered, flouted,  
Sniffed, nonsensed, infideled, fudged, with  
his face  
Looked scorn too nicely shaded to be  
shouted,  
And, with each inch of person and of  
vesture,  
Contrived to hint some most disdainful  
gesture.

At length, when their breath's end was  
come about,  
And both could now and then just gasp  
"impostor!"  
Holding their heads thrust menacingly  
out,  
As staggering cocks keep up their fighting  
posture,  
The stranger smiled and said, "Beyond a  
doubt  
'T is fortunate, my friends, that you have  
lost your  
United parts of speech, or it had been  
Impossible for me to get between.

"Produce! says Nature, — what have you  
produced?  
A new strait-waistcoat for the human mind;  
Are you not limbed, nerved, jointed,  
arteried, juiced,  
As other men? yet, faithless to your  
kind,  
Rather like noxious insects you are used  
To puncture life's fair fruit, beneath the  
rind  
Laying your creed-eggs, whence in time  
there spring  
Consumers new to eat and buzz and sting.

"Work! you have no conception how  
't will sweeten  
Your views of Life and Nature, God and  
Man;  
Had you been forced to earn what you  
have eaten,  
Your heaven had shown a less dyspeptic  
plan;  
At present your whole function is to eat  
ten  
And talk ten times as rapidly as you can;  
Were your shape true to cosmogonic laws,  
You would be nothing but a pair of jaws.

"Of all the useless beings in creation  
The earth could spare most easily you  
bakers  
Of little clay gods, formed in shape and  
fashion  
Precisely in the image of their makers;  
Why, it would almost move a saint to  
passion,  
To see these blind and deaf, the hourly  
breakers  
Of God's own image in their brother  
men,  
Set themselves up to tell the how, where,  
when,

"Of God's existence; one's digestion's  
worse —  
So makes a god of vengeance and of blood;  
Another, — but no matter, they reverse  
Creation's plan, out of their own vile mud  
Pat up a god, and burn, drown, hang, or  
curse  
Whoever worships not; each keeps his stud  
Of texts which wait with saddle on and  
bridle  
To hunt down atheists to their ugly idol.

"This, I perceive, has been your occupa-  
tion;  
You should have been more usefully em-  
ployed;  
All men are bound to earn their daily  
ration,  
Where States make not that primal contract  
void  
By cramps and limits; simple devastation  
Is the worm's task, and what he has des-  
troyed  
His monument; creating is man's work  
And that, too, something more than mist  
and murk."

So having said, the youth was seen no  
more,  
And straightway our sage Brahmin, the  
philosopher,  
Cried, "That was aimed at thee, thou  
endless bore,  
Idle and useless as the growth of moss over  
A rotting tree-trunk!" "I would square  
that score  
Full soon," replied the Dervise, "could I  
cross over  
And catch thee by the beard. Thy nails  
I'd trim  
And make thee work, as was advised by  
him."

"Work? Am I not at work from morn  
till night  
Sounding the deeps of oracles umbilical  
Which for man's guidance never come to  
light,  
With all their various aptitudes, until I  
call?"  
"And I, do I not twirl from left to right  
For conscience' sake? Is that no work?  
Thou silly gull,  
He had thee in his eye; 't was Gabriel  
Sent to reward my faith, I know him  
well."

"T was Vishnu, thou vile whirligig!"  
and so  
The good old quarrel was begun anew;  
One would have sworn the sky was black  
as sloe,  
Had but the other dared to call it blue;  
Nor were the followers who fed them  
slow  
To treat each other with their curses, too,  
Each hating t' other (moves it tears or  
laughter?)  
Because he thought him sure of hell here-  
after.

At last some genius built a bridge of boats  
Over the stream, and Ahmed's zealots filed  
Across, upon a mission to (cut throats  
And) spread religion pure and undefiled;  
They sowed the propagandist's wildest  
oats,  
Cutting off all, down to the smallest child,  
And came back, giving thanks for such  
fat mercies,  
To find their harvest gone past prayers  
or curses.

All gone except their saint's religious  
hops,  
Which he kept up with more than common  
flourish;  
But these, however satisfying crops  
For the inner man, were not enough to  
nourish  
The body politic, which quickly drops  
Reserve in such sad junctures, and turns  
currish;  
So Ahmed soon got cursed for all the  
famine  
Where'er the popular voice could edge a  
damn in.

At first he pledged a miracle quite boldly,  
And, for a day or two, they growled and  
waited;  
But, finding that this kind of manna  
coldly  
Sat on their stomachs, they ere long berated  
The saint for still persisting in that old  
lie,  
Till soon the whole machine of saintship  
grated,  
Ran slow, creaked, stopped, and, wishing  
him in Tophet,

They gathered strength enough to stone  
the prophet.

Some stronger ones contrived (by eating  
leather,  
Their weaker friends, and one thing or  
another)  
The winter months of scarcity to weather;  
Among these was the late saint's younger  
brother,  
Who, in the spring, collecting them to-  
gether,  
Persuaded them that Ahmed's holy pother  
Had wrought in their behalf, and that  
the place  
Of Saint should be continued to his race.

Accordingly, 't was settled on the spot  
That Allah favored that peculiar breed;  
Beside, as all were satisfied, 't would not  
Be quite respectable to have the need  
Of public spiritual food forgot;  
And so the tribe, with proper forms, de-  
creed  
That he, and, failing him, his next of  
kin,  
Forever for the people's good should spin.

## THE BIGLOW PAPERS

### FIRST SERIES

IN a letter, June 16, 1846, to Mr. Sydney Howard Gay, then editor of the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, Lowell wrote: "I mean to send all the poems I write (on whatever subject) first to the *Standard*, except such arrows as I may deem it better to shoot from the ambushment of the *Courier*, because the old enemy offers me a fairer mark from that quarter. . . . You will find a squib of mine in this week's *Courier*. I wish it to continue anonymous, for I wish slavery to think it has as many enemies as possible. If I may judge from the number of persons who have asked me if I wrote it, I have struck the old hulk of the Public between wind and water." This was the first of the *Biglow Papers*. The scheme of anonymity was preserved through the first series, and as Lowell wrote forty years later to Thomas Hughes (*Letters*, II. 334): "I had great fun out of it. I have often wished that I could have had a literary *nom de guerre*, and kept my own to myself. I should n't have cared a doit what

happened to *him*." But as appears from the letter given above, the satire was readily fathered on Lowell, and many of the subsequent papers were published in the *Standard*. "As for Hosea," he wrote to his friend Mr. Charles F. Briggs, November 13, 1847, "I am sorry that I began by making him such a detestable speller. There is no fun in bad spelling of itself, but only where the misspelling suggests something else which is droll *per se*. You see I am getting him out of it gradually. I mean to altogether. Parson Wilbur is about to propose a subscription for fitting him for college, and has already commenced his education. Perhaps you like the last best, because it is more personal and has therefore more directness of purpose. But I confess I think that Birdofredom's attempt to explain the Anglo-Saxon theory is the best thing yet, except Parson Wilbur's letter in the *Courier* of last Saturday." The series ran at intervals for about eighteen months, when the papers were

collected into a volume. Lowell's letters, written when he was busy over the equipment of the book, show him in high spirits over his *jeu d'esprit*. "I am going," he writes to Mr. Briggs, "to indulge all my fun in a volume of H. Biglow's verses which I am preparing, and which I shall edit under the character of the Rev. Mr. Wilbur. I hope you saw Mr. B.'s last production, which I consider his best hitherto. I am going to include in the volume an essay of the reverend gentleman on the Yankee dialect, and on dialects in general, and on everything else, and also an attempt at a complete natural history of the Humbug—which I think I shall write in Latin. The book will purport to be published at Jaalam (Mr. B.'s native place), and will be printed on brownish paper, with those little head and tail-pieces which used to adorn our earlier publications—such as hives, scrolls, urns, and the like."

This was written on the last day of the year 1847, but it was not until September of the next year that the actual volume got under way; for meanwhile Lowell's original design had been modified, and he turned the fun he had been devising for the volume of mock poetry into the collection of his Biglow Papers. The essay on the Yankee dialect by Mr. Wilbur was included, but it was not till the second series was published, nearly twenty years later, that there appeared the scholarly introduction, not now as a piece of affected pedantry, but as the serious and delightful study of the author delivered in his own voice.

At the beginning of September, 1848, Lowell wrote to Mr. Gay: "I am as busy as I can be with Mr. Biglow's poems, of which I have got between twenty and thirty pages already printed. It is the hardest book to print that ever I had anything to do with, and what with corrections and Mr. Wilbur's annotations, keeps me more employed than I care to be." Later in the same month he wrote to the same correspondent that he was "wearied out with Mr. Biglow and his tiresome (though wholly respectable) friend Mr. Wilbur." His notes continue to show the pressure under which he worked until the book was published, the middle of November. The first edition (1500) was gone in a week, and the book and its author became famous.

A little more than ten years afterward an English edition was to appear, and Thomas Hughes, who had it in charge, wrote to Lowell asking for a new preface. The answer, a portion of which is here given, is interesting as showing how the book appeared as a whole to its author when he was in the midst of his University service and had made a name for himself as scholar and critic as well as poet.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., Sept. 13, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR:—I have put off from time to time writing to you, because I hardly knew what to write. To say simply that I liked your writings would have been pleasant enough (though that would have given me no claim upon you that was not shared by all the world), but I find it particularly hard to write anything about a book of my own. It has been a particular satisfaction to me to hear, now and then, some friendly voice from the old mother-land say "Well done" of the *Biglow Papers*; for, to say the truth, I like them myself, and when I was reading them over for a new edition, a year or two ago, could not help laughing. But then as I laughed I found myself asking, "Are these yours? How did you make them?" Friendly people say to me sometimes, "Write us more *Biglow Papers*," and I have even been simple enough to try, only to find that I could not. This has helped to persuade me that the book was a genuine growth, and not a manufacture, and that, therefore, I had an honest right to be pleased without blushing if people liked it. But then, this very fact makes it rather hard to write an introduction to it. All I can say is that the book was *thar*; how it came is more than I can tell. I cannot, like the great Goethe, deliberately imagine what would have been a proper *Entstehungsweise* for my book, and then assume it as a fact. And as for an historical preface, I find that quite as hard after now twelve years of more cloistered interests and studies that have alienated me very much from contemporary politics. I only know that I believed our war with Mexico (though we had as just ground for it as a strong nation ever has against a weak one) to be essentially a war of false pretences, and that it would result in widening the boundaries and so prolonging the life of slavery. Believing that it is the manifest destiny of the English race to occupy this whole continent, and to display there that practical understanding in matters of government and colonization which no other race has given such proof of possessing since the Romans, I hated to see a noble hope evaporated into a lying phrase to sweeten the foul breath of demagogues. Leaving the sin of it to God, I believed, and still believe, that slavery is the Achilles-heel of our polity; that it is a temporary and false supremacy of the white races, sure to destroy that supremacy at last, because an enslaved people always prove themselves of more enduring fibre than their enslavers, as not suffering from the social vices sure to be engendered by oppression in the governing class. Against these and many other things I thought all honest men should protest. I was born and bred in the country, and the dialect



was homely to me. I tried my first *Biglow* paper in a newspaper, and found that it had a great run. \* So I wrote the others from time to time during the year which followed, always very rapidly, and sometimes (as with "What Mr. Robinson thinks") at one sitting.

When I came to collect them and publish them in a volume, I conceived my parson-editor, with his pedantry and verbosity, his amiable vanity and superiority to the verses he was editing, as a fitting artistic background and foil. It gave me the chance, too, of glancing obliquely at many things which were beyond the horizon of my other characters. I was told afterwards that my Parson Wilbur was only Jedediah Cleishbotham over again, and I dare say it may be so; but I drew him from the life as well as I could, and for the authentic reasons I have mentioned. I confess that I am proud of the recognition the book has received in England, because it seems to prove that, despite its intense provincialism, there is a general truth to human nature in it which justifies its having been written.

#### NOTICES OF AN INDEPENDENT PRESS

[I HAVE observed, reader (bene- or malevolent, as it may happen), that it is customary to append to the second editions of books, and to the second works of authors, short sentences commendatory of the first, under the title of *Notices of the Press*. These, I have been given to understand, are procurable at certain established rates, payment being made either in money or advertising patronage by the publisher, or by an adequate outlay of servility on the part of the author. Considering these things with myself, and also that such notices are neither intended, nor generally believed, to convey any real opinions, being a purely ceremonial accompaniment of literature, and resembling certificates to the virtues of various moribiferal panaceas, I conceived that it would be not only more economical to prepare a sufficient number of such myself, but also more immediately subservient to the end in view to prefix them to this our primary edition rather than to await the contingency of a second, when they would seem to be of small utility. To delay attaching the *bobs* until the second attempt at flying the kite would indicate but a slender experience in that useful art. Neither has it escaped my notice, nor failed to afford me matter of reflection, that, when a circus or a caravan is about to visit Jaalam, the initial step is to send forward large and highly ornamented bills of performance, to be hung in the bar-room and the

But life is too short to write about one's self in, and you see that I cannot make a suitable preface. I would rather have something of this kind: "It could not but be gratifying to the writer of the *Biglow Papers* that Mr. Triibner should deem it worth his while to publish an edition of them in England. It gives him a particular pleasure that the author of *Tom Brown's School Days* should have consented to see the work through the press, for the remarkable favor with which that work was received on both sides of the Atlantic proved that all speakers of the English tongue, however differing in other respects, agree wholly in their admiration for soundness of head and heart and manliness of character."

Now do not think this is "Buncombe."

The first series as here given retains the elaborate apparatus attached to the poem, in the order given in the book when first published by George Nichols, Cambridge.

post-office. These having been sufficiently gazed at, and beginning to lose their attractiveness except for the flies, and, truly, the boys also (in whom I find it impossible to repress, even during school-hours, certain oral and telegraphic communications concerning the expected show), upon some fine morning the band enters in a gayly painted wagon, or triumphal chariot, and with noisy advertisement, by means of brass, wood, and sheepskin, makes the circuit of our startled village streets. Then, as the exciting sounds draw nearer and nearer, do I desiderate those eyes of Aristarchus, "whose looks were as a breeching to a boy." Then do I perceive, with vain regret of wasted opportunities, the advantage of a paneratic or pantechnic education, since he is most revered by my little subjects who can throw the cleanest summerset or walk most securely upon the revolving cask. The story of the Pied Piper becomes for the first time credible to me (albeit confirmed by the Hameliners dating their legal instruments from the period of his exit), as I behold how those strains, without pretence of magical potency, bewitch the pupillary legs, nor leave to the pedagogic an entire self-control. For these reasons, lest my kingly prerogative should suffer diminution, I prorogue my restless commons, whom I follow into the street, chiefly lest some mischief may chance befall them. After the manner of such a band, I send forward the following notices of domestic manufacture, to make brazen proclamation, not unconscious of the advantage which will accrue,

if our little craft, *cymbula subtilis*, shall seem to leave port with a clipping breeze, and to carry, in nautical phrase, a bone in her mouth. Nevertheless, I have chosen, as being more equitable, to prepare some also sufficiently oburgatory, that readers of every taste may find a dish to their palate. I have modelled them upon actually existing specimens, preserved in my own cabinet of natural curiosities. One, in particular, I had copied with tolerable exactness from a notice of one of my own discourses, which, from its superior tone and appearance of vast experience, I concluded to have been written by a man at least three hundred years of age, though I recollected no existing instance of such antediluvian longevity. Nevertheless, I afterwards discovered the author to be a young gentleman preparing for the ministry under the direction of one of my brethren in a neighboring town, and whom I had once instinctively corrected in a Latin quantity. But this I have been forced to omit, from its too great length. — H. W.]

*From the Universal Litterary Universe.*

Full of passages which rivet the attention of the reader. . . . Under a rustic garb, sentiments are conveyed which should be committed to the memory and engraven on the heart of every moral and social being. . . . We consider this a *unique* performance. . . . We hope to see it soon introduced into our common schools. . . . Mr. Wilbur has performed his duties as editor with excellent taste and judgment. . . . This is a vein which we hope to see successfully prosecuted. . . . We hail the appearance of this work as a long stride toward the formation of a purely aboriginal, indigenous, native, and American literature. We rejoice to meet with an author national enough to break away from the slavish deference, too common among us, to English grammar and orthography. . . . Where all is so good, we are at a loss how to make extracts. . . . On the whole, we may call it a volume which no library, pretending to entire completeness, should fail to place upon its shelves.

*From the Higginbottomopolis Snapping-turtle.*

A collection of the merest balderdash and doggerel that it was ever our bad fortune to lay eyes on. The author is a vulgar buffoon, and the editor a talkative, tedious old fool. We use strong language, but should any of our readers peruse the book, (from which calamity Heaven preserve them!) they will find reasons for it thick as the leaves of Vallumbrozer, or, to use a still more expressive comparison, as the combined heads of author and editor. The work is wretchedly got up. . . . We should like to know how much *British gold* was pocketed by this libeller of our country and her purest patriots.

*From the Oldfogrumville Mentor.*

We have not had time to do more than glance through this handsomely printed volume, but the name of its respectable editor, the Rev. Mr. Wilbur, of Jaalam, will afford a sufficient guaranty for the worth of its contents. . . . The paper is white, the type clear, and the volume of a convenient and attractive size. . . . In reading this elegantly executed work, it has seemed to us that a passage or two might have been retrenched with advantage, and that the general style of diction was susceptible of a higher polish. . . . On the whole, we may safely leave the ungrateful task of criticism to the reader. We will barely suggest, that in volumes intended, as this is, for the illustration of a provincial dialect and turns of expression, a dash of humor or satire might be thrown in with advantage. . . . The work is admirably got up. . . . This work will form an appropriate ornament to the centre-table. It is beautifully printed, on paper of an excellent quality.

*From the Dekay Bulwark.*

We should be wanting in our duty as the conductor of that tremendous engine, a public press, as an American, and as a man, did we allow such an opportunity as is presented to us by "The Biglow Papers" to pass by without entering our earnest protest against such attempts (now, alas! too common) at demoralizing the public sentiment. Under a wretched mask of stupid drollery, slavery, war, the social glass, and, in short, all the valuable and time-honored institutions justly dear to our common humanity and especially to republicans, are made the butt of coarse and senseless ribaldry by this low-minded scribbler. It is time that the respectable and religious portion of our community should be aroused to the alarming inroads of foreign Jacobinism, sansculottism, and infidelity. It is a fearful proof of the wide-spread nature of this contagion, that these secret stabs at religion and virtue are given from under the cloak (*credite, posteri!*) of a clergyman. It is a mournful spectacle indeed to the patriot and Christian to see liberality and new ideas (falsely so called, — they are as old as Eden) invading the sacred precincts of the pulpit. . . . On the whole, we consider this volume as one of the first shocking results which we predicted would spring out of the late French "Revolution" (!).

*From the Bungtown Copper and Comprehensive Tocsin (a tryweakly family journal).*

Altogether an admirable work. . . . Full of humor, boisterous, but delicate, — of wit withering and scorching, yet combined with a pathos cool as morning dew, — of satire ponderous as the mace of Richard, yet keen as the scymitar of Saladin. . . . A work full of "mountain-mirth," mischievous as Puck, and lightsome as Ariel. . . . We know not whether to admire most the genial, fresh, and discursive concinnity of the

author, or his playful fancy, weird imagination, and compass of style, at once both objective and subjective. . . . We might indulge in some criticisms, but, were the author other than he is, he would be a different being. As it is, he has a wonderful *pose*, which flits from flower to flower, and bears the reader irresistibly along on its eagle pinions (like Ganymede) to the "highest heaven of invention." . . . We love a book so purely objective. . . . Many of his pictures of natural scenery have an extraordinary subjective clearness and fidelity. . . . In fine, we consider this as one of the most extraordinary volumes of this or any age. We know of no English author who could have written it. It is a work to which the proud genius of our country, standing with one foot on the Aroostook and the other on the Rio Grande, and holding up the star-spangled banner amid the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds, may point with bewildering scorn of the punier efforts of enslaved Europe. . . . We hope soon to encounter our author among those higher walks of literature in which he is evidently capable of achieving enduring fame. Already we should be inclined to assign him a high position in the bright galaxy of our American bards.

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*From the Saltriver Pilot and Flag of Freedom.*

A volume in bad grammar and worse taste. . . . While the pieces here collected were confined to their appropriate sphere in the corners of obscure newspapers, we considered them wholly beneath contempt, but, as the author has chosen to come forward in this public manner, he must expect the lash he so richly merits. . . . Contemptible slanders. . . . Vildest Billingsgate. . . . Has raked all the gutters of our language. . . . The most pure, upright, and consistent politicians not safe from his malignant venom. . . . General Cushing comes in for a share of his vile calumnies. . . . The Reverend Homer Wilbur is a disgrace to his cloth. . . .

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*From the World-Harmonic-Æolian-Attachment.*

Speech is silver: silence is golden. No utterance more Orphic than this. While, therefore, as highest author, we reverence him whose works continue heroically unwritten, we have also our hopeful word for those who with pen (from wing of goose loud-cackling, or seraph God-commissioned) record the thing that is revealed. . . . Under mask of quaintest irony, we detect here the deep, storm-tost (nigh ship-wracked) soul, thunder-scarred, semi-articulate, but ever climbing hopefully toward the peaceful summits of an Infinite Sorrow. . . . Yes, thou poor, forlorn Hosea, with Hebrew fire-flaming soul in thee, for thee also this life of ours has not been without its aspects of heavenliest pity and laughingest mirth. Conceivable enough! Through coarse Thersites-cloak, we have revelation of the heart, wild-glowing, world-clasping,

that is in him. Bravely he grapples with the life-problem as it presents itself to him, uncombed, shaggy, careless of the "nicer proprieties," inexpert of "elegant diction," yet with voice audible enough to whoso hath ears, up there on the gravelly side-hills, or down on the splashy, indiarubber-like salt-marshes of native Jaalam. To this soul also the *Necessity of Creating* somewhat has unveiled its awful front. If not (Edipuses and Electras and Alcestises, then in God's name Birdofredum Sawins! These also shall get born into the world, and fleh (if so need) a Zingali subsistence therein, these lank, omnivorous Yankees of his. He shall paint the Seen, since the Unseen will not sit to him. Yet in him also are Nibelungen-lays, and Iliads, and Ulysses-wanderings, and Divine Comedies, — if only once he could come at them! Therein lies much, nay all; for what truly is this which we name *All*, but that which we do not possess? . . . Glimpses also are given us of an old father Ezekiel, not without paternal pride, as is the wont of such. A brown, parchment-hided old man of the geoponic or bucolic species, gray-eyed, we fancy, *queued* perhaps, with much weather-cunning and plentiful September-gale memories, bidding fair in good time to become the Oldest Inhabitant. After such hasty apparition, he vanishes and is seen no more. . . . Of "Rev. Homer Wilbur, A. M., Pastor of the First Church in Jaalam," we have small care to speak here. Spare touch in him of his Melesigenes namesake, save, haply, the — blindness! A tolerably caliginous, nephelegeretous elderly gentleman, with infinite faculty of sermonizing, muscularized by long practice and excellent digestive apparatus, and, for the rest, well-meaning enough, and with small private illuminations (somewhat tallowy, it is to be feared) of his own. To him, there, "Pastor of the First Church in Jaalam," our Hosea presents himself as a quite inexplicable Sphinx-riddle. A rich poverty of Latin and Greek, — so far is clear enough, even to eyes peering myopic through horn-lensed editorial spectacles, — but naught farther? O purblind, well-meaning, altogether fuscous Melesigenes-Wilbur, there are things in him incommunicable by stroke of birch! Did it ever enter that old bewildered head of thine that there was the *Possibility of the Infinite* in him? To thee, quite wingless (and even featherless) biped, has not so much even as a dream of wings ever come? "Talented young parishioner?" Among the Arts whereof thou art *Magister*, does that of *seeing* happen to be one? Unhappy *Artium Magister*! Somehow a Nemean lion, fulvous, torrid-eyed, dry-nursed in broad-howling sand-wildernesses of a sufficiently rare spirit-Libya (it may be supposed) has got whelped among the sheep. Already he stands wild-glaring, with feet clutching the ground as with oak-roots, gathering for a Remus-spring over the walls of thy little fold. In Heaven's name, go not near him with that flybite crook of thine! In good time, thou painful preacher, thou wilt go to the appointed place of departed Artillery-Election Sermons, Right-Hands of



Fellowship, and Results of Councils, gathered to thy spiritual fathers with much Latin of the Epitaphial sort; thou, too, shalt have thy reward; but on him the Eumenides have looked, not Xantippes of the pit, snake-tressed, finger-threatening, but radiantly calm as on antique gems; for him paws impatient the winged courser of the gods, champing unwelcome bit; him the starry deeps, the empyrean glooms, and far-flashing splendors await.

*From the Onion Grove Phoenix.*

A talented young townsman of ours, recently returned from a Continental tour, and who is already favorably known to our readers by his sprightly letters from abroad which have graced our columns, called at our office yesterday. We learn from him, that, having enjoyed the distinguished privilege, while in Germany, of an introduction to the celebrated Von Humbug, he took the opportunity to present that eminent man with a copy of the "Biglow Papers." The next morning he received the following note, which he has kindly furnished us for publication. We prefer to print it *verbatim*, knowing that our readers will readily forgive the few errors into which the illustrious writer has fallen, through ignorance of our language.

"HIGH-WORTHY MISTER !

"I shall also now especially happy starve, because I have more or less a work one those aboriginal Red-Men seen in which have I so deaf an interest ever taken full-worthy on the self shelf with our Gottsched to be upset.

"Pardon my in the English-speech un-practice!  
VON HUMBUG."

He also sent with the above note a copy of his famous work on "Cosmetics," to be presented to Mr. Biglow; but this was taken from our friend by the English custom-house officers, probably through a petty national spite. No doubt, it has by this time found its way into the British Museum. We trust this outrage will be exposed in all our American papers. We shall do our best to bring it to the notice of the State Department. Our numerous readers will share in the pleasure we experience at seeing our young and vigorous national literature thus encouragingly patted on the head by this venerable and world-renowned German. We love to see these reciprocations of good-feeling between the different branches of the great Anglo-Saxon race.

[The following genuine "notice" having met my eye, I gladly insert a portion of it here, the more especially as it contains one of Mr. Biglow's poems not elsewhere printed.—H. W.]

*From the Jaalam Independent Blunderbuss.*

... But, while we lament to see our young townsman thus mingling in the heated contests of party politics, we think we detect in him the

presence of talents which, if properly directed, might give an innocent pleasure to many. As a proof that he is competent to the production of other kinds of poetry, we copy for our readers a short fragment of a pastoral by him, the manuscript of which was loaned us by a friend. The title of it is "The Courtin'."

ZEKLE ckep' up, quite unbeknown,  
An' peeked in thru the winder,  
An' there sot Huld' all alone,  
'ith no one nigh to hender.

Agin' the chimby crocknecks hung,  
An' in amongst 'em rusted  
The ole queen's-arm thet gran'ther Young  
Fetched back frum Concord busted.

The wannut logs shot sparkles out  
Towards the pootiest, bless her!  
An' leetle fires danced all about  
The chiny on the dresser.

The very room, coz she wuz in,  
Looked warm frum floor to ceilin',  
An' she looked full ez rosy agin  
Ez th' apples she wuz peelin'.

She heerd a foot an' knowed it, tu,  
Araspin' on the scraper,—  
All ways to once her feelins flew  
Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,  
Some doubtfle o' the seekle;  
His heart kep' goin' pitypat,  
But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yet she gin her cheer a jerk  
Ez though she wished him funder,  
An' on her apples kep' to work  
Ez ef a wager spurred her.

"You want to see my Pa, I spose?"

"Wall, no; I come designin'—"

"To see my Ma? She's sprinklin' clo'es  
Agin to-morrow's i'nin'."

He stood a spell on one foot fust,  
Then stood a spell on tother,  
An' on which one he felt the wust  
He could n't ha' told ye, nuther.

Sez he, "I'd better call agin;"  
Sez she, "Think likely, Mister;"  
The last word pricked him like a pin,  
An'—wal, he up and kist her.

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips,  
Huld' sot pale ez ashes,  
All kind o' smily round the lips  
An' teary round the lashes.

Her blood riz quick, though, like the tide  
Down to the Bay o' Fundy,  
An' all I know is thety wuz cried  
In meetin', come nex Sunday.



SATIS multis sese emptores futuros libri professis, Georgius Nichols, Cantabrigiensis, opus emittet de parte gravi sed adhuc neglecta historiæ naturalis, cum titulo sequente, videlicet:

*Conatus ad Delineationem naturalem nonnihil perfectiorem Scarabæi Bombilatoris, vulgo dicti HUMBUG, ab HOMERO WILBUR, Artium Magistro, Societatis historico-naturalis Jaalamensis Præside (Secretario, Socioque (eheu!) singulo), multarumque aliarum Societatum eruditarum (sive ineruditarum) tam domesticarum quam transmarinarum Socio — forsitan futuro.*

## PROEMIUM

### LECTORI BENEVOLO S.

Toga scholastica nondum deposita, quum systemata varia entomologica, a viris ejus scientiæ-cultoribus studiosissimis summa diligentia ædificata, penitus indagâsem, non fuit quin luctuose omnibus in iis, quamvis aliter laude dignissimis, hiatum magni momenti perciperem. Tunc, nescio quo motu superiore impulsus, aut qua captus dulcedine operis, ad eum implendum (Curtius alter) me solemniter devovi. Nec ab isto labore, *δαιμονίας* impositis, abstinui antequam tractatulum sufficienter inconcinnum lingua vernacula perfeceram. Inde, juveniliter tumefactus, et barathro ineptiæ τῶν βιβλιοπαλῶν (neenon "Publici Legentis") nusquam explorato, me composuisse quod quasi placentas præferendas (ut sic dicam) homines ingurgitare credidi. Sed, quum huic et alio bibliopolæ MSS. mea submissem et nihil solidius responsione valde negativa in Musæum meum retulissem, horror ingens atque misericordia, ob crassitudinem Lambertianam in cerebris homunculorum istius muneris cœlesti quadam ira infixam, me invasere. Extemplo mei solius impensis librum edere decrevi, nihil omnino dubitans quin "Mundus Scientificus" (ut aiunt) crumenam meam ampliter repletet. Nullam, attamen, ex agro illo meo parvulo segetem demessui præter gaudium vacuum bene de Republica merendi. Iste panis meus pretiosus super aquas literarias fœculentas præfidenter jactus, quasi Harpyiarum quarundam (scilicet bibliopolarum istorum facinorosorum supradictorum) tactu rancidus, intra perpaucos dies mihi domum rediit. Et, quum ipse tali victu ali non tolerarem, primum in mentem venit pistori (typographo nempe) nihilominus solvendum esse. Animum non idcirco demisi, imo æque ac pueri naviculas suas penes se lino retinent (eo ut e recto cursu delapsas ad ripam retrahant), sic ego Argô meam chartaceam fluctibus laborantem a quæsitu velleris aurei, ipse potius tonsus pelleque exutus, mente solida revocavi. Metaphoram ut mutem, *boomaran-*

*gam* meam a scopo aberrantem retraxi, dum majore vi, occasione ministrante, adversus Fortunam intorquerem. Ast mihi, Italia volventi, et, sicut Saturnus ille *παδοββρος*, liberos intellectûs mei depascere fidenti, casus miserandus, nec antea inauditus, supervenit. Nam, ut ferunt Scythas pietatis causa et parsimoniei, parentes suos mortuos devorâsse, sic filius hic meus primogenitus, Scythis ipsis minus mansuetus, patrem vivum totum et calcitrantem exsorbere enixus est. Nec tamen hac de causa sobolem meam esurientem exheredavi. Sed famem istam pro valido testimonio virilitatis roborisque potius habui, cibumque ad eam satiandam, salva paterna mea carne, petii. Et quia bilem illam scaturientem ad æs etiam concoquendum idoneam esse estimabam, unde æs alienum, ut minoris pretii, haberem, circumspexi. Rebus ita se habentibus, ab avunculo meo Johanne Doolittle, Armigero, impetravi ut pecunias necessarias suppeditaret, ne opus esset mihi universitatem relinquendi antequam ad gradum primum in artibus pervenissem. Tunc ego, salvum facere patronum meum munificum maxime cupiens, omnes libros primæ editionis operis mei non venditos una cum privilegio in omne ævum ejusdem imprimendi et edendi avunculo meo dicto pigneravi. Ex illo die, atro lapide notando, curæ vociferantis familiæ singulis annis crescentis eo usque insultabant ut nunquam tam earum pignus e vinculis istis aheis solvere possem.

Avunculo vero nuper mortuo, quum inter alios consanguineos testamenti ejus lectionem audiendi causa advenissem, erectis auribus verba talia sequentia accepi: "Quoniam persuasum habeo meum dilectum nepotem Homerum, longa et intima rerum angustiarum domi experientia, aptissimum esse qui divitias tueatur, beneficentique ac prudenter iis divinis creditis utatur, — ergo, motus hisee cogitationibus, exque amore meo in illum magno, do, legoque nepoti caro meo supranominato omnes singularesque istas possessiones nec ponderabiles nec computabiles meas quæ sequuntur, scilicet: quingentos libros quos mihi pigneravi dictus Homerus, anno lucis 1792, cum privilegio edendi et repetendi opus istud 'scientificum' (quod dicunt) suum, si se elegerit. Tamen D. O. M. precor oculos Homeri nepotis mei ita aperiat eumque moveat, ut libros istos in bibliotheca unius e plurimis castellis suis Hispanicis tibi abscondat."

His verbis (vix credibilibus, auditis, cor meum in pectore exsultavit. Deinde, quoniam tractatus Anglice scriptus spem auctoris fefellerat, quippe quum studium Historiæ Naturalis in Republica nostra inter factionis strepitum languescat, Latine versum edere statui, et eo potius quia nescio quomodo disciplina academica et duo diplomata proficiant, nisi quod

peritos linguarum omnino mortuarum (et dam-  
nandarum, ut dicebat iste *πρωὺργος* Guil-  
mus Cobbett) nos faciant.

Et mihi adhuc superstes est tota illa editio  
prima, quam quasi crepitaculum per quod  
dentes caninos dentibam retineo.

## OPERIS SPECIMEN

(*Ad exemplum Johannis Physiophili speciminis  
Monachologiae.*)

12. S. B. *Militaris*, WILBUR. *Carnifer*, JA-  
BLONSK. *Profanus*, DESFONT.

[Male hancce speciem *Cyclopem* Fabricius  
vocat, ut qui singulo oculo ad quod sui interest  
distinguitur. Melius vero Isaacus Outis nullum  
inter S. milit. S. que Belzebul (Fabric. 152)  
discrimen esse defendit.]

Habitat civitat. Americ. austral.

Aureis lineis splendidus; plerumque tamen  
sordidus, utpote lanienas valde frequentans,  
fœtore sanguinis allectus. Amat quoque in-  
super septa apriari, neque inde, nisi maxima  
conatione detruditur. *Candidatus* ergo popu-  
lariter vocatus. Caput eristam quasi pennarum  
ostendit. Pro cibo vaccam publicam callide  
mulget; abdomen enorme; facultas suctus  
haud facile estimanda. Otiosus, fatuus; ferox  
nihilominus, semperque dimicare paratus. Tor-  
tuose repit.

Capite speæ maxima cum cura dissecto, ne  
illud rudimentum etiam cerebri commune omni-  
bus prope insectis detegere poteram.

Unam de hoc S. milit. rem singularem notavi;  
nam S. Guineens. (Fabric. 143) amat quoque in-  
deicirco a multis summa in reverentia habitus,  
quasi scintillas rationis pæne humanæ demon-  
strans.

24. S. B. *Criticus*, WILBUR. *Zoilus*, FABRIC.  
*Pygmaeus*, CARLSEN.

[Stultissime Johannes Stryx cum S. punctato  
(Fabric. 64-109) confundit. Specimina quam-  
plurima scrutationi microscopicæ subjeci, nun-  
quam tamen unum ulla indicia puncti ejusvis  
prorsus ostendentem inveni.]

Præcipue formidolosus, insectatusque, in  
proxima rima anonyma sese abscondit, *we, we*,  
creberrime stridens. Ineptus, segnipes.

Habitat ubique gentium; in sicco; nidum  
suum terebratione indefessa ædificans. Cibus.  
Libros depascit; siccos præcipue.

MELIBŒUS-HIPPONAX.

THE

**Biglow Papers,**

EDITED,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION, NOTES,  
GLOSSARY, AND COPIOUS INDEX,

BY

HOMER WILBUR, A. M.,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN JAALAM, AND (PRO-  
SPECTIVE) MEMBER OF MANY LITERARY, LEARNED,  
AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES,

(for which see page 173).

The ploughman's whistle, or the trivial flute,  
Finds more respect than great Apollo's lute.

*Quarles's Emblems*, B. ii. E. 8.

Margaritas, munde porcine, calcasti : en, silliquas accipe.  
*Jac. Car. Fil. ad Pub. Leg.* § 1.

## NOTE TO TITLE-PAGE

IT will not have escaped the attentive eye,  
that I have, on the title-page, omitted those  
honorary appendages to the editorial name  
which not only add greatly to the value of  
every book, but whet and exacerbate the appe-  
tite of the reader. For not only does he sur-  
mise that an honorary membership of literary  
and scientific societies implies a certain amount  
of necessary distinction on the part of the re-  
cipient of such decorations, but he is willing  
to trust himself more entirely to an author  
who writes under the fearful responsibility of  
involving the reputation of such bodies as the  
*S. Archæol. Dahom.* or the *Acad. Lit. et Scient.  
Kamtschat.* I cannot but think that the early  
editions of Shakespeare and Milton would  
have met with more rapid and general accept-  
ance, but for the barrenness of their respec-  
tive title-pages; and I believe that, even now,  
a publisher of the works of either of those  
justly distinguished men would find his ac-  
count in procuring their admission to the  
membership of learned bodies on the Conti-  
nent, — a proceeding no whit more incongru-  
ous than the reversal of the judgment against  
Socrates, when he was already more than  
twenty centuries beyond the reach of anti-  
dotes, and when his memory had acquired a  
deserved respectability. I conceive that it was  
a feeling of the importance of this precaution  
which induced Mr. Locke to style himself  
"Gent." on the title-page of his Essay, as who  
should say to his readers that they could re-  
ceive his metaphysics on the honor of a gentle-  
man.

Nevertheless, finding that, without descending to a smaller size of type than would have been compatible with the dignity of the several societies to be named, I could not compress my intended list within the limits of a single page, and thinking, moreover, that the act would carry with it an air of decorous modesty, I have chosen to take the reader aside, as it were, into my private closet, and there not only exhibit to him the diplomas which I already possess, but also to furnish him with a prophetic vision of those which I may, without undue presumption, hope for, as not beyond the reach of human ambition and attainment. And I am the rather induced to this from the fact that my name has been unaccountably dropped from the last triennial catalogue of our beloved *Alma Mater*. Whether this is to be attributed to the difficulty of Latinizing any of those honorary adjuncts (with a complete list of which I took care to furnish the proper persons nearly a year beforehand), or whether it had its origin in any more culpable motives, I forbear to consider in this place, the matter being in course of painful investigation. But, however this may be, I felt the omission the more keenly, as I had, in expectation of the new catalogue, enriched the library of the Jaalam Athenæum with the old one then in my possession, by which means it has come about that my children will be deprived of a never-wearying winter evening's amusement in looking out the name of their parent in that distinguished roll. Those harmless innocents had at least committed no — but I forbear, having intrusted my reflections and animadversions on this painful topic to the safe-keeping of my private diary, intended for posthumous publication. I state this fact here, in order that certain nameless individuals, who are, perhaps, overmuch congratulating themselves upon my silence, may know that a rod is in pickle which the vigorous hand of a justly incensed posterity will apply to their memories.

The careful reader will note that, in the list which I have prepared, I have included the names of several Cisatlantic societies to which a place is not commonly assigned in processions of this nature. I have ventured to do this, not only to encourage native ambition and genius, but also because I have never been able to perceive in what way distance (unless we suppose them at the end of a lever) could increase the weight of learned bodies. As far as I have been able to extend my researches among such stuffed specimens as occasionally reach America, I have discovered no generic difference between the antipodal *Fogrum Japonicum* and the *F. Americanum* sufficiently

common in our own immediate neighborhood. Yet, with a becoming deference to the popular belief that distinctions of this sort are enhanced in value by every additional mile they travel, I have intermixed the names of some tolerably distant literary and other associations with the rest.

I add here, also, an advertisement, which, that it may be the more readily understood by those persons especially interested therein, I have written in that curtailed and otherwise maltreated canine Latin, to the writing and reading of which they are accustomed.

OMNIB. PER TOT. ORB. TERRAR. CATALOG.  
ACADEM. EDD.

Minim. gent. diplom. ab inclytiss. acad. vest. orans, vir. honorand. operosiss., at sol. ut sciat. quant. glor. nom. meum (dipl. fort. concess.) catal. vest. temp. futur. affer., ill. subjee., addit. omnib. titul. honorar. qu. adh. non tant. opt. quam probab. put.

\* \* Litt. Uncial. distinx. ut Præs. S. Hist. Nat. Jaal.

HOMERUS WILBUR, Mr., Episc. Jaalam, S. T. D. 1850, et Yal. 1849, et Neo-Cæs. et Brun. et Gulielm. 1852, et Gul. et Mar. et Bowd. et Georgiop. et Viridimont. et Columb. Nov. Ebor. 1853, et Amherst. et Watervill. et S. Jarlath. Hib. et S. Mar. et S. Joseph. et S. And. Scot. 1854, et Nashvill. et Dart. et Dickens. et Concord. et Wash. et Columbian. et Charlest. et Jeff. et Dubl. et Oxon. et Cantab. et Cæt. 1855, P. U. N. C. H. et J. U. D. Gott. et Osnab. et Heidelb. 1860, et Acad. BORE US. Berolin. Soc., et SS. R.R. Lugd. Bat. et Patav. et Lond. et Edinb. et Ins. Feejee. et Null. Terr. et Pekin. Soc. Hon. et S. H. S. et S. P. A. et A. A. S. et S. Humb. Univ. et S. Omn. Rer. Quarund. q. Aliar. Promov. Passamaquod. et H. P. C. et I. O. H. et A. Δ. Φ. et Π. K. P. et Φ. B. K. et Pencin. et Erosoph. et Philadelph. et Frat. in Unit. et Z. T. et S. Archæolog. Athen. et Acad. Scient. et Lit. Panorm. et SS. R. H. Matrit. et Beeloochist. et Caffrar. et Caribb. et M. S. Reg. Paris. et S. Am. Antiserv. Soc. Hon. et P. D. Gott. et LL. D. 1852, et D. C. L. et Mus. Doc. Oxon. 1860, et M. M. S. S. et M. D. 1854, et Med. Fac. Univ. Harv. Soc. et S. pro Convers. Pollywog. Soc. Hon. et Higgl. Piggl. et LL. B. 1853, et S. pro Christianiz. Moschet. Soc. et SS. Antediluv. ubiq. Gent. Soc. Hon. et Civit. Cleric. Jaalam. et S. pro Diffus. General. Tenebr. Secret. Corr.



## INTRODUCTION

WHEN, more than three years ago, my talented young parishioner, Mr. Biglow, came to me and submitted to my animadversions the first of his poems which he intended to commit to the more hazardous trial of a city newspaper, it never so much as entered my imagination to conceive that his productions would ever be gathered into a fair volume, and ushered into the august presence of the reading public by myself. So little are we short-sighted mortals able to predict the event! I confess that there is to me a quite new satisfaction in being associated (though only as sleeping partner) in a book which can stand by itself in an independent unity on the shelves of libraries. For there is always this drawback from the pleasure of printing a sermon, that, whereas the queasy stomach of this generation will not bear a discourse long enough to make a separate volume, those religious and godly-minded children (those Samuels, if I may call them so) of the brain must at first lie buried in an undistinguished heap, and then get such resurrection as is vouchsafed to them, mummy-wrapped with a score of others in a cheap binding, with no other mark of distinction than the word "*Miscellaneous*" printed upon the back. Far be it from me to claim any credit for the quite unexpected popularity which I am pleased to find these bucolic strains have attained unto. If I know myself, I am measurably free from the itch of vanity; yet I may be allowed to say that I was not backward to recognize in them a certain wild, puckery, acidulous (sometimes even verging toward that point which, in our rustic phrase, is termed *shut-eyed*) flavor, not wholly unpleasing, nor unwholesome, to palates cloyed with the sugariness of tamed and cultivated fruit. It may be, also, that some touches of my own, here and there, may have led to their wider acceptance, albeit solely from my larger experience of literature and authorship.<sup>1</sup>

I was at first inclined to discourage Mr. Biglow's attempts, as knowing that the desire to poetize is one of the diseases naturally incident to adolescence, which, if the fitting remedies be not at once and with a bold hand applied, may become chronic, and render one, who might else have become in due time an ornament of the social circle, a painful object even to nearest friends and relatives. But thinking, on a further experience, that there was a germ of promise in him which required

only culture and the pulling up of weeds from about it, I thought it best to set before him the acknowledged examples of English composition in verse, and leave the rest to natural emulation. With this view, I accordingly lent him some volumes of Pope and Goldsmith, to the assiduous study of which he promised to devote his evenings. Not long afterward, he brought me some verses written upon that model, a specimen of which I subjoin, having changed some phrases of less elegance, and a few rhymes objectionable to the cultivated ear. The poem consisted of childish reminiscences, and the sketches which follow will not seem destitute of truth to those whose fortunate education began in a country village. And, first, let us hang up his charcoal portrait of the school-dame.

"Propped on the marsh, a dwelling now, I see  
The humble school-house of my A, B, C,  
Where well-drilled urchins, each behind his  
tire,

Waited in ranks the wished command to fire,  
Then all together, when the signal came,  
Discharged their *a-b abs* against the dame.  
Daughter of Danaus, who could daily pour  
In treacherous pipkins her Pierian store,  
She, mid the volleyed learning firm and calm,  
Patted the furloughed ferule on her palm,  
And, to our wonder, could divine at once  
Who flashed the pan, and who was downright  
dunce.

"There young Devotion learned to climb with  
ease

The gnarly limbs of Scripture family-trees,  
And he was most commended and admired  
Who soonest to the topmost twig perspired;  
Each name was called as many various ways  
As pleased the reader's ear on different days,  
So that the weather, or the ferule's stings,  
Colds in the head, or fifty other things,  
Transformed the helpless Hebrew thrice a  
week

To guttural Pequot or resounding Greek,  
The vibrant accent skipping here and there,  
Just as it pleased invention or despair;  
No controversial Hebraist was the Dame;  
With or without the points pleased her the  
same;

If any tyro found a name too tough,  
And looked at her, pride furnished skill  
enough;

She nerved her larynx for the desperate thing,  
And cleared the five-barred syllables at a  
spring.

"Ah, dear old times! there once it was my hap,  
Perched on a stool, to wear the long-eared cap;  
From books degraded, there I sat at ease,  
A drone, the envy of compulsory bees;  
Rewards of merit, too, full many a time,

*A Discourse on the Late Eclipse, Dorcas, a Funeral Sermon on the Death of Madam Submit Tidd, Relict of the late Experience Tidd, Esq., &c., &c.*

<sup>1</sup> The reader curious in such matters may refer (if he can find them) to *A sermon preached on the Anniversary of the Dark Day, An Artillery Election Sermon,*



Each with its woodcut and its moral rhyme,  
And pierced half-dollars hung on ribbons gay  
About my neck (to be restored next day)  
I carried home, rewards as shining then  
As those that deck the lifelong pains of men,  
More solid than the redemanded praise  
With which the world beribbons later days.

"Ah, dear old times! how brightly ye return!  
How, rubbed afresh, your phosphor traces burn!  
The ramble schoolward through dewsparkling meads,  
The willow-wands turned Cinderella steeds,  
The impromptu pin-bent hook, the deep remorse  
O'er the chance-captured minnow's inchlong course;  
The pockets, plethoric with marbles round,  
That still a space for ball and pegtop found,  
Nor satiate yet, could manage to confine  
Horsechestnuts, flagroot, and the kite's wound twine,  
Nay, like the prophet's carpet could take in,  
Enlarging still, the popgun's magazine;  
The dinner carried in the small tin pail,  
Shared with some dog, whose most beseeching tail  
And dripping tongue and eager ears belied  
The assumed indifference of canine pride;  
The caper homeward, shortened if the cart  
Of Neighbor Pomeroy, trundling from the mart,  
O'ertook me, — then, translated to the seat  
I praised the steed, how stanch he was and fleet,  
While the bluff farmer, with superior grin,  
Explained where horses should be thick, where thin,  
And warned me (joke he always had in store)  
To shun a beast that four white stockings wore.  
What a fine natural courtesy was his!  
His nod was pleasure, and his full bow bliss;  
How did his well-thumbed hat, with ardor rapt,  
Its curve decorous to each rank adapt!  
How did it graduate with a courtly ease  
The whole long scale of social differences,  
Yet so gave each his measure running o'er,  
None thought his own was less, his neighbor's more;  
The squire was flattered, and the pauper knew  
Old times acknowledged 'neath the threadbare blue!  
Dropped at the corner of the embowered lane,  
Whistling I wade the knee-deep leaves again,  
While eager Argus, who has missed all day  
The sharer of his condescending play,  
Comes leaping onward with a bark elate  
And boisterous tail to greet me at the gate;  
That I was true in absence to our love  
Let the thick dog's-ears in my primer prove."

I add only one further extract, which will possess a melancholy interest to all such as

have endeavored to glean the materials of revolutionary history from the lips of aged persons, who took a part in the actual making of it, and, finding the manufacture profitable, continued the supply in an adequate proportion to the demand.

"Old Joe is gone, who saw hot Percy goad  
His slow artillery up the Concord road,  
A tale which grew in wonder, year by year,  
As, every time he told it, Joe drew near  
To the main fight, till, faded and grown gray,  
The original scene to bolder tints gave way;  
Then Joe had heard the foe's scared double-quick  
Beat on stove drum with one uncaptured stick,  
And, ere death came the lengthening tale to lop,  
Himself had fired, and seen a red-coat drop;  
Had Joe lived long enough, that scrambling fight  
Had squared more nearly with his sense of right,  
And vanquished Percy, to complete the tale,  
Had hammered stone for life in Concord jail."

I do not know that the foregoing extracts ought not to be called my own rather than Mr. Biglow's, as, indeed, he maintained stoutly that my file had left nothing of his in them. I should not, perhaps, have felt entitled to take so great liberties with them, had I not more than suspected an hereditary vein of poetry in myself, a very near ancestor having written a Latin poem in the Harvard *Gratulation* on the accession of George the Third. Suffice it to say, that, whether not satisfied with such limited approbation as I could conscientiously bestow, or from a sense of natural inaptitude, certain it is that my young friend could never be induced to any further essays in this kind. He affirmed that it was to him like writing in a foreign tongue, — that Mr. Pope's versification was like the regular ticking of one of Willard's clocks, in which one could fancy, after long listening, a certain kind of rhythm or tune, but which yet was only a poverty-stricken *tick, tick*, after all, — and that he had never seen a sweet-water on a trellis growing so fairly, or in forms so pleasing to his eye, as a fox-grape over a scrub-oak in a swamp. He added I know not what, to the effect that the sweet-water would only be the more disfigured by having its leaves starched and ironed out, and that Pegasus (so he called him) hardly looked right with his mane and tail in curl-papers. These and other such opinions I did not long strive to eradicate, attributing them rather to a defective education and senses untuned by too long familiarity with purely natural objects, than to a perverted moral sense. I was the more inclined to this leniency since

sufficient evidence was not to seek, that his verses, wanting as they certainly were in classic polish and point, had somehow taken hold of the public ear in a surprising manner. So, only setting him right as to the quantity of the proper name Pegasus, I left him to follow the bent of his natural genius.

Yet could I not surrender him wholly to the tutelage of the pagan (which, literally interpreted, signifies village) muse without yet a further effort for his conversion, and to this end I resolved that whatever of poetic fire yet burned in myself, aided by the assiduous bellows of correct models, should be put in requisition. Accordingly, when my ingenious young parishioner brought to my study a copy of verses which he had written touching the acquisition of territory resulting from the Mexican war; and the folly of leaving the question of slavery or freedom to the adjudication of chance, I did myself indite a short fable or apologue after the manner of Gay and Prior, to the end that he might see how easily even such subjects as he treated of were capable of a more refined style and more elegant expression. Mr. Biglow's production was as follows:—

## THE TWO GUNNERS

### A FABLE

Two fellers, Isrel named and Joe,  
One Sundy mornin' 'greed to go  
Agunnin' soon 'z the bells wuz done  
And meetin' finally begun,  
So'st no one would n't be about  
Ther Sabbath-breakin' to spy out.

Joe did n't want to go a mite;  
He felt ez though 't warn't skeercely right,  
But, when his doubts he went to speak on,  
Isrel he up and called him Deacon,  
An' kep' apokin' fun like sin  
An' then arubbin' on it in,  
Till Joe, less skeered o' doin' wrong  
Than bein' laughed at, went along.

Past noontime they went trampin' round  
An' nary thing to pop at found,  
Till, fairly tired o' their spree,  
They leaned their guns agin a tree,  
An' jest ez they wuz settin' down  
To take their noonin', Joe looked roun'  
And see (acrost lots in a pond  
That warn't mor'n twenty rod beyond)  
A goose that on the water sot  
Ez ef awaitin' to be shot.

Isrel he ups and grabs his gun;  
Sez he, "By ginger, here's some fun!"  
"Don't fire," sez Joe, "it ain't no use,  
Thet's Deacon Peleg's tame wil'-goose:"  
Sez Isrel, "I don't care a cent.

I've sighted an' I'll let her went;"  
*Bang!* went queen's-arm, ole gander flopped  
His wings a spell, an' quorked, an' dropped.

Sez Joe, "I would n't ha' been hired  
At that poor critter to ha' fired,  
But sence it's clean gin up the ghost,  
We'll hev the tallest kind o' roast;  
I guess our waistbands 'll be tight  
'Fore it comes ten o'clock ternaht."

"I won't agree to no such bender,"  
Sez Isrel; "keep it tell it's tender;  
'T aint wuth a snap afore it's ripe,"  
Sez Joe, "I'd jest ez lives eat tripe;  
You air a buster ter suppose  
I'd eat what makes me hol' my nose!"

So they disputed to an' fro  
Till cunnin' Isrel sez to Joe,  
"Don't le's stay here an' play the fool,  
Le's wait till both on us git cool,  
Jest for a day or two le's hide it,  
An' then toss up an' so decide it,"  
"Agreed!" sez Joe, an' so they did,  
An' the ole goose wuz safely hid.

Now't wuz the hottest kind o' weather,  
An' when at last they come together,  
It did n't signify which won,  
Fer all the mischief hed been done:  
The goose wuz there, but, fer his soul,  
Joe would n't ha' tetchet it with a pole;  
But Isrel kind o' liked the smell on't  
An' made *his* dinner very well on't.

My own humble attempt was in manner and form following, and I print it here, I sincerely trust, out of no vainglory, but solely with the hope of doing good.

## LEAVING THE MATTER OPEN

### A TALE

BY HOMER WILBUR, A. M.

Two brothers once, an ill-matched pair,  
Together dwelt (no matter where),  
To whom an Uncle Sam, or some one,  
Had left a house and farm in common.  
The two in principles and habits  
Were different as rats from rabbits;  
Stout Farmer North, with frugal care,  
Laid up provision for his heir,  
Not scorning with hard sun-browned hands  
To scrape acquaintance with his lands;  
Whatever thing he had to do  
He did, and made it pay him, too;  
He sold his waste stone by the pound,  
His drains made water-wheels spin round,  
His ice in summer-time he sold,  
His wood brought profit when 't was cold,  
He dug and delved from morn till night,  
Strove to make profit square with right,

Lived on his means, cut no great dash,  
And paid his debts in honest cash.

On tother hand, his brother South  
Lived very much from hand to mouth,  
Played gentleman, nursed dainty hands,  
Borrowed North's money on his lands,  
And culled his morals and his graces  
From cock-pits, bar-rooms, fights, and races;  
His sole work in the farming line  
Was keeping droves of long-legged swine,  
Which brought great bothers and expenses  
To North in looking after fences,  
And, when they happened to break through,  
Cost him both time and temper too,  
For South insisted it was plain  
He ought to drive them home again,  
And North consented to the work  
Because he loved to buy cheap pork.

Meanwhile, South's swine increasing fast,  
His farm became too small at last;  
So, having thought the matter over,  
And feeling bound to live in clover  
And never pay the clover's worth,  
He said one day to Brother North: —

"Our families are both increasing,  
And, though we labor without ceasing,  
Our produce soon will be too scant  
To keep our children out of want;  
They who wish fortune to be lasting  
Must be both prudent and forecasting;  
We soon shall need more land; a lot  
I know, that cheaply can be got;  
You lend the cash, I'll buy the acres,  
And we'll be equally partakers."

Poor North, whose Anglo-Saxon blood  
Gave him a hankering after mud,  
Wavered a moment, then consented,  
And, when the cash was paid, repented;  
To make the new land worth a pin,  
Thought he, it must be all fenced in,  
For, if South's swine once get the run on 't  
No kind of farming can be done on 't;  
If that don't suit the other side,  
'T is best we instantly divide.

But somehow South could ne'er incline  
This way or that to run the line,  
And always found some new pretence  
'Gainst setting the division fence;  
At last he said: —

"For peace's sake,  
Liberal concessions I will make;  
Though I believe, upon my soul,  
I've a just title to the whole,  
I'll make an offer which I call  
Gen'rous, — we'll have no fence at all;  
Then both of us, whene'er we choose,  
Can take what part we want to use;  
If you should chance to need it first,  
Pick you the best, I'll take the worst."

"Agreed!" cried North; thought he, This fall  
With wheat and rye I'll sow it all;

In that way I shall get the start,  
And South may whistle for his part.  
So thought, so done, the field was sown,  
And, winter having come and gone,  
Sly North walked blithely forth to spy,  
The progress of his wheat and rye;  
Heavens, what a sight! his brother's swine  
Had asked themselves all out to dine;  
Such grunting, munching, rooting, shoving,  
The soil seemed all alive and moving,  
As for his grain, such work they'd made on 't,  
He could n't spy a single blade on 't.

Off in a rage he rushed to South,  
"My wheat and rye" — grief choked his  
mouth:

"Pray don't mind me," said South, "but plant  
All of the new land that you want;"

"Yes, but your hogs," cried North;

"The grain  
Won't hurt them," answered South again;  
"But they destroy my crop;"

"No doubt;  
'T is fortunate you've found it out;  
Misfortunes teach, and only they,  
You must not sow it in their way;"  
"Nay, you," says North, "must keep them  
out;"

"Did I create them with a snout?"  
Asked South demurely; "as agreed,  
The land is open to your seed,  
And would you fain prevent my pigs  
From running there their harmless rigs?  
God knows I view this compromise  
With not the most approving eyes;  
I gave up my unquestioned rights  
For sake of quiet days and nights;  
I offered then, you know 't is true,  
To cut the piece of land in two."

"Then cut it now," growls North;

"Abate  
Your heat," says South, "'t is now too late;  
I offered you the rocky corner,  
But you, of your own good the scorner,  
Refused to take it; I am sorry;  
No doubt you might have found a quarry,  
Perhaps a gold-mine, for aught I know,  
Containing heaps of native rhino;  
You can't expect me to resign  
My rights" —

"But where," quoth North, "are mine?"  
"Your rights," says tother, "well, that's  
funny,  
I bought the land" —

"I paid the money;"  
"That," answered South, "is from the point,  
The ownership, you'll grant, is joint;  
I'm sure my only hope and trust is  
Not law so much as abstract justice,  
Though, you remember, 't was agreed  
That so and so — consult the deed;  
Objections now are out of date,



They might have answered once, but Fate  
 Quashes them at the point we've got to ;  
*Obsta principis*, that's my motto."  
 So saying, North began to whistle  
 And looked as obstinate as gristle,  
 While North went homeward, each brown paw  
 Clenched like a knot of natural law,  
 And all the while, in either ear,  
 Heard something clicking wondrous clear.

To turn now to other matters, there are two things upon which it should seem fitting to dilate somewhat more largely in this place,—the Yankee character and the Yankee dialect. And, first, of the Yankee character, which has wanted neither open maligners, nor ever more dangerous enemies in the persons of those unskilful painters who have given to it that hardness, angularity, and want of proper perspective, which, in truth, belonged, not to their subject, but to their own niggard and unskilful pencil.

New England was not so much the colony of a mother country, as a Hagar driven forth into the wilderness. The little self-exiled band which came hither in 1620 came, not to seek gold, but to found a democracy. They came that they might have the privilege to work and pray, to sit upon hard benches and listen to painful preachers as long as they would yea, even unto thirty-seventhly, if the spirit so willed it. And surely, if the Greek might boast his Thermopylæ, where three hundred men fell in resisting the Persian, we may well be proud of our Plymouth Rock, where a handful of men, women, and children not merely faced, but vanquished, winter, famine, the wilderness, and the yet more invincible *storge* that drew them back to the green island far away. These found no lotus growing upon the surly shore, the taste of which could make them forget their little native Ithaca; nor were they so wanting to themselves in faith as to burn their ship, but could see the fair west-wind belly the homeward sail, and then turn unrepining to grapple with the terrible Unknown.

As Want was the prime foe these hardy exodists had to fortress themselves against, so it is little wonder if that traditional feud be long in wearing out of the stock. The wounds of the old warfare were long a-healing, and an east-wind of hard times puts a new ache into every one of them. Thrift was the first lesson in their horn-book, pointed out, letter after letter, by the lean finger of the hard schoolmistress, Necessity. Neither were those plump, rosy-gilled Englishmen that came hither, but a hard-faced, atrabillious, earnest-eyed race, stiff from long wrestling with the Lord in prayer, and who had taught Satan to dread the new Puritan hug. Add two hundred years' influence of soil, climate, and exposure, with its necessary result

of idiosyncrasies, and we have the present Yankee, full of expedients, half-master of all trades, inventive in all but the beautiful, full of shifts, not yet capable of comfort, armed at all points against the old enemy Hunger, long-animous, good at patching, not so careful for what is best as for what will *do*, with a clasp to his purse and a button to his pocket, not skilled to build against Time, as in old countries, but against sore-pressing Need, accustomed to move the world with no *ποῦ στῶ* but his own two feet, and no lever but his own long forecast. A strange hybrid, indeed, did circumstance beget, here in the New World, upon the old Puritan stock, and the earth never before saw such mystic-practicalism, such niggard-geniality, such calculating-fanaticism, such cast-iron-enthusiasm, such sour-faced-humor, such close-fisted-generosity. This new *Græculus esuriens* will make a living out of anything. He will invent new trades as well as tools. His brain is his capital, and he will get education at all risks. Put him on Juan Fernandez, and he would make a spelling-book first, and a salt-pan afterward. *In calum, jusseris, ibit*,—or the other way either,—it is all one, so anything is to be got by it. Yet, after all, thin, speculative Jonathan is more like the Englishman of two centuries ago than John Bull himself is. He has lost somewhat in solidity, has become fluent and adaptable, but more of the original groundwork of character remains. He feels more at home with Fulke Greville, Herbert of Cherbury, Quarles, George Herbert, and Browne, than with his modern English cousins. He is nearer than John, by at least a hundred years, to Naseby, Marston Moor, Worcester, and the time when, if ever, there were true Englishmen. John Bull has suffered the idea of the Invisible to be very much fattened out of him. Jonathan is conscious still that he lives in the world of the Unseen as well as of the Seen. To move John you must make your fulcrum of solid beef and pudding; an abstract idea will do for Jonathan.

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#### \*\*\* TO THE INDULGENT READER

My friend, the Rev. Mr. Wilbur, having been seized with a dangerous fit of illness, before this Introduction had passed through the press, and being incapacitated for all literary exertion, sent to me his notes, memoranda, &c., and requested me to fashion them into some shape more fitting for the general eye. This, owing to the fragmentary and disjointed state of his manuscripts, I have felt wholly unable to do; yet being unwilling that the reader should be deprived of such parts of his lucubrations as seemed more finished,



and not well discerning how to segregate these from the rest, I have concluded to send them all to the press precisely as they are.

COLUMBUS NYE,

Pastor of a Church in Bungtown Corner.

It remains to speak of the Yankee dialect. And, first, it may be premised, in a general way, that any one much read in the writings of the early colonists need not be told that the far greater share of the words and phrases now esteemed peculiar to New England, and local there, were brought from the mother country. A person familiar with the dialect of certain portions of Massachusetts will not fail to recognize, in ordinary discourse, many words now noted in English vocabularies as archaic, the greater part of which were in common use about the time of the King James translation of the Bible. Shakespeare stands less in need of a glossary to most New-Englanders than to many a native of the Old Country. The peculiarities of our speech, however, are rapidly wearing out. As there is no country where reading is so universal and newspapers are so multitudinous, so no phrase remains long local, but is transplanted in the mail-bags to every remotest corner of the land. Consequently our dialect approaches nearer to uniformity than that of any other nation.

The English have complained of us for coining new words. Many of those so stigmatized were old ones by them forgotten, and all make now an unquestioned part of the currency, wherever English is spoken. Undoubtedly, we have a right to make new words, as they are needed by the fresh aspects under which life presents itself here in the New World; and, indeed, wherever a language is alive, it grows. It might be questioned whether we could not establish a stronger title to the ownership of the English tongue than the mother-islanders themselves. Here, past all question, is to be its great home and centre. And not only is it already spoken here by greater numbers, but with a far higher popular average of correctness than in Britain. The great writers of it, too, we might claim as ours, were ownership to belong by the number of readers and lovers.

As regards the provincialisms to be met with in this volume, I may say that the reader will not find one which is not (as I believe) either native or imported with the early settlers, nor one which I have not, with my own ears, heard in familiar use. In the metrical portion of the book, I have endeavored to adapt the spelling as nearly as possible to the ordinary mode of pronunciation. Let the reader who deems me over-particular remember this caution of Martial:—

"*Quem recitas, meus est, O Fidentine, libellus;  
Sed male cum recitas, incipit esse tuus.*"

A few further explanatory remarks will not be impertinent.

I shall barely lay down a few general rules for the reader's guidance.

1. The genuine Yankee never gives the rough sound to the *r* when he can help it, and often displays considerable ingenuity in avoiding it even before a vowel.

2. He seldom sounds the final *g*, a piece of self-denial, if we consider his partiality for nasals. The same of the final *d*, as *han'* and *stan'* for *hand* and *stand*.

3. The *h* in such words as *while*, *when*, *where*, he omits altogether.

4. In regard to *a*, he shows some inconsistency, sometimes giving a close and obscure sound, as *hev* for *have*, *hendy* for *handy*, *ez* for *as*, *thet* for *that*, and again giving it the broad sound it has in *father*, as *hânsome* for *handsome*.

5. To the sound *ou* he prefixes an *e* (hard to exemplify otherwise than orally).

The following passage in Shakespeare he would recite thus:—

"Neow is the winta uv eour discontent  
Med'lorious summa by this sun o' Yock,  
An' all the cleouds thet leowered upun eour  
heouse  
In the deep buzzum o' the oshin buried;  
Neow air eour brews beound 'ith victorious  
wreaths;  
Eour breused arms hung up fer monimunce;  
Eour starn alarums changed to merry meetins,  
Eour drefle marches to delighfle masures.  
Grim-visaged war heth smeathed his wrinkled  
front,  
An' neow, instid o' mountin' barebid steeds  
To fright the souls o' ferfle edverseries,  
He capers nimly in a lady's chamber,  
To the lascivious pleasin' uv a loot."

6. *Au*, in such words as *daughter* and *slaughter*, he pronounces *ah*.

7. To the dish thus seasoned add a drawl *ad libitum*.

[Mr. Wilbur's notes here become entirely fragmentary.—C. N.]

*a.* Unable to procure a likeness of Mr. Biglow, I thought the curious reader might be gratified with a sight of the editorial effigies. And here a choice between two was offered,—the one a profile (entirely black) cut by Doyle, the other a portrait painted by a native artist of much promise. The first of these seemed wanting in expression, and in the second a slight obliquity of the visual organs has been heightened (perhaps from an over-desire of force on the part of the artist) into too close

an approach to actual *strabismus*. This slight divergence in my optical apparatus from the ordinary model — however I may have been taught to regard it in the light of a mercy rather than a cross, since it enabled me to give as much of directness and personal application to my discourses as met the wants of my congregation, without risk of offending any by being supposed to have him or her in my eye (as the saying is) — seemed yet to Mrs. Wilbur a sufficient objection to the engraving of the aforesaid painting. We read of many who either absolutely refused to allow the copying of their features, as especially did Plotinus and Agesilaus among the ancients, not to mention the more modern instances of Scioppius, Palæottus, Pinellus, Velserus, Gataker, and others, or were indifferent thereto, as Cromwell.

β. Yet was Cæsar desirous of concealing his baldness. *Per contra*, my Lord Protector's carefulness in the matter of his wart might be cited. Men generally more desirous of being improved in their portraits than characters. Shall probably find very unflattered likenesses of ourselves in Recording Angel's gallery.

γ. Whether any of our national peculiarities may be traced to our use of stoves, as a certain closeness of the lips in pronunciation, and a smothered smoulderingness of disposition seldom roused to open flame? An unrestrained intercourse with fire probably conducive to generosity and hospitality of soul. Ancient Mexicans used stoves, as the friar Augustin Ruiz reports, Hakluyt, III. 468, — but Popish priests not always reliable authority.

To-day picked my Isabella grapes. Crop injured by attacks of rose-bug in the spring. Whether Noah was justifiable in preserving this class of insects?

δ. Concerning Mr. Biglow's pedigree. Tolerably certain that there was never a poet among his ancestors. An ordination hymn attributed to a maternal uncle, but perhaps a sort of production not demanding the creative faculty.

His grandfather a painter of the grandiose or Michael Angelo school. Seldom painted objects smaller than houses or barns, and these with uncommon expression.

ε. Of the Wilburs no complete pedigree. The crest said to be a *wild boar*, whence, perhaps, the name. (?) A connection with the Earls of Wilbraham (*quasi* wild boar ham) might be made out. This suggestion worth following up. In 1677, John W. m. Expect —, had issue, 1. John, 2. Haggai, 3. Expect, 4. Ruhamah, 5. Desire.

"Hear lyes y<sup>e</sup> bodeye of Mrs Expect Wilber,  
Y<sup>e</sup> crewell salvages they kil'd her  
Together w<sup>th</sup> other Christian soles eleaven,  
October y<sup>e</sup> ix daye, 1707.  
Y<sup>e</sup> stream of Jordan sh<sup>t</sup> as crost ore  
And now expects me on y<sup>e</sup> other shore:  
I live in hope her soon to join;  
Her earthlye yeeres were forty and nine."  
*From Gravestone in Pekussett, North Parish.*

This is unquestionably the same John who afterward (1711) married Tabitha Hagg or Ragg.

But if this were the case, she seems to have died early; for only three years after, namely, 1714, we have evidence that he married Wini-fred, daughter of Lieutenant Tipping.

He seems to have been a man of substance, for we find him in 1696 conveying "one undivided eightieth part of a salt-meadow" in Yabbok, and he commanded a sloop in 1702.

Those who doubt the importance of genealogical studies *fuste potius quam argumento erudiendi*.

I trace him as far as 1723, and there lose him. In that year he was chosen selectman.

No gravestone. Perhaps overthrown when new hearse-house was built, 1802.

He was probably the son of John, who came from Bilham Comit. Salop. circa 1642.

This first John was a man of considerable importance, being twice mentioned with the honorable prefix of *Mr.* in the town records. Name spelt with two *l*-s.

"Hear lyeth y<sup>e</sup> bod [stone unhappily broken.]  
Mr. Ihon Willber [Esq.] [I inclose this in  
brackets as doubtful. To me it seems  
clear.]  
Ob't die [illegible; looks like xviii.] . . . iii  
[prob. 1693.]

. . . . . paynt  
deseased seinte:  
A friend and [fath]er untoe all y<sup>e</sup> opreast,  
Hee gave y<sup>e</sup> wicked familists noe reast,  
When Sat[an bl]ewe his Antinomian blaste,  
Wee clong to [Willber as a steadf]ast maste.  
[A] gaynst y<sup>e</sup> horrid Qua[kers] . . . . ."

It is greatly to be lamented that this curious epitaph is mutilated. It is said that the sacrilegious British soldiers made a target of the stone during the war of Independence. How odious an animosity which pauses not at the grave! How brutal that which spares not the monuments of authentic history! This is not improbably from the pen of Rev. Moody Pyram, who is mentioned by Hubbard as having been noted for a silver vein of poetry. If his papers be still extant, a copy might possibly be recovered.

## THE BIGLOW PAPERS

No. I

## A LETTER

FROM MR. EZEKIEL BIGLOW OF JAALAM  
TO THE HON. JOSEPH T. BUCKINGHAM,  
EDITOR OF THE BOSTON COURIER, IN-  
CLOSING A POEM OF HIS SON, MR.  
HOSEA BIGLOW

JAYLEM, june 1846.

MISTER EDDYTER :—Our Hosea wuz down to Boston last week, and he see a cruetin Sarjunt a struttin round as popler as a hen with 1 chicking, with 2 fellers a drummin and fifin arter him like all nater. the sarjunt he thout Hosea hed n't gut his i teeth cut cos he looked a kindo 's though he'd jest com down, so he cal'lated to hook him in, but Hosity wood n't take none o' his sarse for all he hed much as 20 Rooster's tales stuck onto his hat and eenamost enuf brass a bobbin up and down on his shoulders and figureed onto his coat and trousis, let alone wut nater hed sot in his featers, to make a 6 pounder out on.

wal, Hosea he com home considerabal riled, and arter I'd gone to bed I heern Him a thrashin round like a short-tailed Bull in fli-time. The old Woman ses she to me ses she, Zekle, ses she, our Hosee 's gut the chollery or suthin anuther ses she, don't you Bee skeered, ses I, he 's oney amakin pottery<sup>1</sup> ses i, he 's ollers on hand at that ere busynes like Da & martin, and shure enuf, cum mornin, Hosity he cum down stares full chizzle, hare on eend and cote tales flyin, and sot rite of to go reed his varses to Parson Wilbur bein he haint aney grate shows o' book larnin himself, bimeby he cum back and sed the parson wuz dreffle tickled with 'em as i hoop you will Be, and said they wuz True grit.

Hosea ses taint hardly fair to call 'em hin now, cos the parson kind o' slicked off sum o' the last varses, but he told Hosee he did n't want to put his ore in to tetch to the Rest on 'em, bein they wuz verry well As thay wuz, and then Hosity ses he sed suthin a nuther about Simplex Mundishes or sum sech feller, but I guess Hosea kind o' did n't hear him, for I never hearn o' nobody o' that name in this villadge, and

I've lived here man and boy 76 year cum next tater diggin, and thair aint no wheres a kitting spryer 'n I be.

If you print 'em I wish you'd jest let folks know who hosity's father is, cos my ant Keziah used to say it's nater to be curus ses she, she aint livin though and he 's a likely kind o' lad.

EZEKIEL BIGLOW.

THRASH away, you 'll hev to rattle

On them kittle-drums o' yourn, —

'Taint a knowin' kind o' cattle

Thet is ketched with mouldy corn ;

Put in stiff, you fifer feller,

Let folks see how spry you be, —

Guess you 'll toot till you are yellor

'Fore you git ahold o' me !

Thet air flag 's a leetle rotten,

Hope it aint your Sunday's best ;—

Fact ! it takes a sight o' cotton

To stuff out a soger's chest:

Sence we farmers hev to pay fer 't,

Ef you must wear humps like these,

S'posin' you should try salt hay fer 't,

It would du ez slick ez grease.

'T would n't suit them Southun fellers,

They 're a dreffle graspin' set,

We must ollers blow the bellers

Wen they want their irons het ;

May be it 's all right ez preachin',

But *my* narves it kind o' grates,

Wen I see the overreachin'

O' them nigger-drivin' States.

Them thet rule us, them slave-traders,

Haint they cut a thunderin' swarth

(Helped by Yankee renegaders),

Thru the vartu o' the North !

We begin to think it 's nater

To take sarse an' not be riled ; —

Who 'd expect to see a tater

All on eend at bein' biled ?

Ez fer war, I call it murder, —

There you hev it plain an' flat ;

I don't want to go no furdur

Than my Testymnt fer that ;

God hez sed so plump an' fairly,

It 's ez long ez it is broad,

An' you 've gut to git up airly

Ef you want to take in God.

<sup>1</sup> Aut insanit, aut versos facit. — H. W.

'Taint your eppyletts an' feathers  
 Make the thing a grain more right;  
 'Taint afollerin' your bell-wethers  
 Will excuse ye in His sight;  
 Ef you take a sword an' dror it,  
 An' go stick a feller thru,  
 Guv'ment aint to answer for it,  
 God 'll send the bill to you.

Wut 's the use o' meetin'-goin'  
 Every Sabbath, wet or dry,  
 Ef it 's right to go amowin'  
 Feller-men like oats an' rye ?  
 I dunno but wut it 's pooty  
 Trainin' round in bobtail coats, —  
 But it 's curus Christian dooty  
 This 'ere cuttin' folks's throats.

They may talk o' Freedom's airy  
 Tell they 're pupple in the face, —  
 It 's a grand gret cemetary  
 Fer the barthrighs of our race;  
 They jest want this Californy  
 So 's to lug new slave-states in  
 To abuse ye, an' to scorn ye,  
 An' to plunder ye like sin.

Aint it cute to see a Yankee  
 Take sech everlastin' pains,  
 All to get the Devil's thankee  
 Helpin' on 'em weld their chains ?  
 Wy, it 's jest ez clear ez figgers,  
 Clear ez one an' one make two,  
 Chaps thet make black slaves o' niggers  
 Want to make wite slaves o' you.

Tell ye jest the eend I 've come to  
 Arter cipherin' plaguy smart,  
 An' it makes a handy sum, tu,  
 Any gump could larn by heart;  
 Laborin' man an' laborin' woman  
 Hev one glory an' one shame.  
 Ev'y thin' thet 's done inhuman  
 Injers all on 'em the same.

'Taint by turnin' out to hack folks  
 You 're agoin' to git your right,  
 Nor by lookin' down on black folks  
 Coz you 're put upon by wite;  
 Slavery aint o' nary color,  
 'Taint the hide thet makes it wus,  
 All it keers fer in a feller  
 'S jest to make him fill its pus.

Want to tackle *me* in, du ye ?  
 I expect you 'll hev to wait;  
 Wen cold lead puts daylight thru ye  
 You 'll begin to kal'late;  
 S'pose the crows wun't fall to pickin'  
 All the carkiss from your bones,  
 Coz you helped to give a lickin'  
 To them poor half-Spanish drones ?

Jest go home an' ask our Nancy  
 Wether I 'd be sech a goose  
 Ez to jine ye, — guess you 'd fancy  
 The eternal bung wuz loose !  
 She wants me fer home consumption,  
 Let alone the hay 's to mow, —  
 Ef you 're arter folks o' gumption,  
 You 've a darned long row to hoe.

Take them editors thet 's crowin'  
 Like a cockerel three months old, —  
 Don't ketch any on 'em goin',  
 Though they *be* so blasted bold;  
 Aint they a prime lot o' fellers ?  
 'Fore they think on 't guess they 'll  
 sprout  
 (Like a peach thet 's got the yellers),  
 With the meanness bustin' out.

Wal, go 'long to help 'em stealin'  
 Bigger pens to cram with slaves,  
 Help the men thet 's ollers dealin'  
 Insults on your fathers' graves;  
 Help the strong to grind the feeble,  
 Help the many agin the few,  
 Help the men thet call your people  
 Witewashed slaves an' peddlin' crew !

Massachusetts, God forgive her,  
 She 's akneelin' with the rest,  
 She, thet ough' to ha' clung ferever  
 In her grand old eagle-nest;  
 She thet ough' to stand so fearless  
 W'ile the wracks are round her hurled,  
 Holdin' up a beacon peerless  
 To the oppressed of all the world !

Ha'n't they sold your colored seamen ?  
 Ha'n't they made your env'ys w'iz ?  
 Wut 'll make ye act like freemen ?  
 Wut 'll git your dander riz ?  
 Come, I 'll tell ye wut I 'm thinkin'  
 Is our dooty in this fix,  
 They 'd ha' done 't ez quick ez winkin'  
 In the days o' seventy-six.



Clang the bells in every steeple,  
 Call all true men to disown  
 The tradoozers of our people,  
 The enslavers o' their own;  
 Let our dear old Bay State proudly  
 Put the trumpet to her mouth,  
 Let her ring this messidge loudly  
 In the ears of all the South:—

“I'll return ye good fer evil  
 Much ez we frail mortils can,  
 But I wun't go help the Devil  
 Makin' man the cus o' man;  
 Call me coward, call me traiter,  
 Jest ez suits your mean idees,—  
 Here I stand a tyrant-hater,  
 An' the friend o' God an' Peace!”

Ef I'd my way I hed ruther  
 We should go to work an' part,  
 They take one way, we take t' other,  
 Guess it would n't break my heart;  
 Man hed ough' to put asunder  
 Them thet God has noways jined;  
 An' I should n't gretly wonder  
 Ef there's thousands o' my mind.

[The first recruiting sergeant on record I conceive to have been that individual who is mentioned in the Book of Job as *going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it*. Bishop Latimer will have him to have been a bishop, but to me that other calling would appear more congenial. The sect of Cainites is not yet extinct, who esteemed the first-born of Adam to be the most worthy, not only because of that privilege of primogeniture, but inasmuch as he was able to overcome and slay his younger brother. That was a wise saying of the famous Marquis Pescara to the Papal Legate, that *it was impossible for men to serve Mars and Christ at the same time*. Yet in time past the profession of arms was judged to be κατ' ἐξοχήν that of a gentleman, nor does this opinion want for strenuous upholders even in our day. Must we suppose, then, that the profession of Christianity was only intended for losels, or, at best, to afford an opening for plebeian ambition? Or shall we hold with that nicely metaphysical Pomeranian, Captain Vratz, who was Count Königsmark's chief instrument in the murder of Mr. Thynne, that the Scheme of Salvation has been arranged with an especial eye to the necessities of the upper classes, and that “God would consider a gentleman and deal with him suitably to the condition and profession he had placed him in”? It may be said of us all, *Exemplo plus quam ratione vivimus*.—H. W.]

## No. II

## A LETTER

FROM MR. HOSEA BIGLOW TO THE HON. J. T. BUCKINGHAM, EDITOR OF THE BOSTON COURIER, COVERING A LETTER FROM MR. B. SAWIN, PRIVATE IN THE MASSACHUSETTS REGIMENT

[THIS letter of Mr. Sawin's was not originally written in verse. Mr. Biglow, thinking it peculiarly susceptible of metrical adornment, translated it, so to speak, into his own vernacular tongue. This is not the time to consider the question, whether rhyme be a mode of expression natural to the human race. If leisure from other and more important avocations be granted, I will handle the matter more at large in an appendix to the present volume. In this place I will barely remark, that I have sometimes noticed in the unlanguage prattlings of infants a fondness for alliteration, assonance, and even rhyme, in which natural predisposition we may trace the three degrees through which our Anglo-Saxon verse rose to its culmination in the poetry of Pope. I would not be understood as questioning in these remarks that pious theory which supposes that children, if left entirely to themselves, would naturally discourse in Hebrew. For this the authority of one experiment is claimed, and I could, with Sir Thomas Browne, desire its establishment, inasmuch as the acquirement of that sacred tongue would thereby be facilitated. I am aware that Herodotus states the conclusion of Psammetichus to have been in favor of a dialect of the Phrygian. But, beside the chance that a trial of this importance would hardly be blessed to a Pagan monarch whose only motive was curiosity, we have on the Hebrew side the comparatively recent investigation of James the Fourth of Scotland. I will add to this prefatory remark, that Mr. Sawin, though a native of Jaalam, has never been a stated attendant on the religious exercises of my congregation. I consider my humble efforts prospered in that not one of my sheep hath ever indued the wolf's clothing of war, save for the comparatively innocent diversion of a militia training. Not that my flock are backward to undergo the hardships of defensive warfare. They serve cheerfully in the great army which fights, even unto death *pro aris et focis*, accoutred with the spade, the axe, the plane, the sledge, the spelling-book, and other such effectual weapons against want and ignorance and unthrift. I have taught them (under God) to esteem our human institutions as but tents of a night, to be stricken whenever Truth puts the bugle to

her lips and sounds a march to the heights of wider-viewed intelligence and more perfect organization. — H. W.]

MISTER BUCKINUM, the follerin Billet was writ hum by a Yung feller of our town that wuz cussed fool enuff to goe atrottin inter Miss Chiff arter a Drum and fife. it ain't Nater for a feller to let on that he's sick o' any bizness that He went intu off his own free will and a Cord, but I rather cal'late he's middlin tired o' voluntearin By this Time. I bleeve u may put depend-unts on his statemente. For I never heered nothin bad on him let Alone his havin what Parson Wilbur cals a *pong shong* for cocktales, and he ses it wuz a soshiashun of idees sot him agoin arter the Crootin Sargient cos he wore a cocktale onto his hat.

his Folks gin the letter to me and i shew it to parson Wilbur and he ses it oughter Bee printed. send It to mister Buckinum, ses he, i don't ollers agree with him, ses he, but by Time,<sup>1</sup> ses he, I *du* like a feller that aint a Feared.

I have intusspused a Few refleckshuns hear and thair. We're kind o' prest with Hayin.

Ewers respectfly  
HOSEA BIGLOW.

THIS kind o' sogerin' aint a mite like our October trainin',  
A chap could clear right out from there ef 't only looked like rainin',  
An' th' Cunnles, tu, could kiver up their shappoes with bandanners,  
An' send the insines skootin' to the bar-room with their banners  
(Fear o' gittin' on 'em spotted), an' a feller could cry quarter  
Ef he fired away his ramrod arter tu much rum an' water.  
Recollect wut fun we hed, you'n' I an' Ezry Hollis,  
Up there to Waltham plain last fall, along o' the Cornwallis? <sup>2</sup>  
This sort o' thing aint *jest* like thet, — I wish thet I wuz furdur,<sup>3</sup> —

<sup>1</sup> In relation to this expression, I cannot but think that Mr. Biglow has been too hasty in attributing it to me. Though Time be a comparatively innocent personage to swear by, and though Longinus in his discourse Περὶ Ὑψους have commended timely oaths as not only a useful but sublime figure of speech, yet I have always kept my lips free from that abomination. *Odi*

Nimepunce a day fer killin' folks comes kind o' low fer murder,  
(Wy I've worked out to slarterin' some fer Deacon Cephas Billins,  
An' in the hardest times there wuz I ollers tetched ten shillins.)  
There's suththin' gits into my throat thet makes it hard to swaller,  
It comes so nateral to think about a hempen collar;  
It's glory, — but, in spite o' all my tryin' to git callous,  
I feel a kind o' in a cart, aridin' to the gallus.  
But wen it comes to *bein'* killed, — I tell ye I felt streaked  
The fust time 't ever I found out wy bag-gonets wuz peaked;  
Here's how it wuz: I started out to go to a fandango,  
The sentinul he ups an' sez, "Thet's furdur 'an you can go."  
"None o' your sarse," sez I; sez he, "Stan' back!" "Aint you a buster?"  
Sez I, "I'm up to all thet air, I guess I've ben to muster;  
I know wy sentinuls air sot; you aint agoin' to eat us;  
Caleb haint no monopoly to court the seenoreetas;  
My folks to hum air full ez good ez his'n be, by golly!"  
An' so ez I wuz goin' by, not thinkin' wut would folly,  
The everlastin' cus he stuck his one-pronged pitchfork in me  
An' made a hole right thru my close ez ef I wuz an in'my.

Wal, it beats all how big I felt hoorawin' in ole Funnel  
Wen Mister Bolles he gin the sword to our Leftenant Cunnle,  
(It's Mister Secondary Bolles,<sup>4</sup> thet writ the prize peace essay;  
Thet's wy he did n't list himself along o' us, I dessay,)

*profanum vulgus*, I hate your swearing and hectoring fellows. — H. W.

<sup>2</sup> i hait the Site of a feller with a muskit as I *du* pizn But their *is* fun to a cornwallis I aint agoin' to deny it. — H. B.

<sup>3</sup> he means Not quite so fur I guess. — H. B.

<sup>4</sup> the ignerant creeter means Sekketary; but he ollers stuck to his books like cobbler's wax to an ile-stone. — H. B.

An' Rantoul, tu, talked pooty loud, but  
 don't put *his* foot in it,  
 Coz human life 's so sacred thet he 's  
 principled agin it,—  
 Though I myself can't rightly see it 's any  
 wus achokin' on 'em,  
 Than puttin' bullets thru their lights, or  
 with a bagnet pokin' on 'em;  
 How dreffle slick he reeled it off (like  
 Blitz at our lyceum  
 Ahaulin' ribbins from his chops so quick  
 you skeerely see 'em),  
 About the Anglo-Saxon race (an' saxons  
 would be handy  
 To du the buryin' down here upon the Rio  
 Grandy),  
 About our patriotic pas an' our star-  
 spangled banner,  
 Our country's bird alookin' on an' singin'  
 out hosanner,  
 An' how he (Mister B. himself) wuz happy  
 fer Ameriky,—  
 I felt, ez sister Patience sez, a leetle mite  
 histericky.  
 I felt, I swon, ez though it wuz a dreffle  
 kind o' privilege  
 Atrampin' round thru Boston streets  
 among the gutter's drivelage;  
 I act'ly thought it wuz a treat to hear a  
 little drummin',  
 An' it did bonyfidy seem millanyum wuz  
 aecomin',  
 Wen all on us got suits (darned like them  
 wore in the state prison)  
 An' every feller felt ez though all Mexico  
 wuz hisn.<sup>1</sup>

This 'ere 's about the meanest place a  
 skunk could wal diskiver  
 (Saltillo 's Mexican, I b'lieve, fer wut we  
 call Salt-river);  
 The sort o' trash a feller gits to eat doos  
 beat all nater,  
 I'd give a year's pay fer a smell o' one  
 good blue-nose tater;  
 The country here thet Mister Bolles de-  
 clared to be so charmin'

<sup>1</sup> it must be aloud that thare 's a streak of nater in  
 lovin' sho, but it sartinly is 1 of the curusest things in  
 nater to see a rispecktable dri goods dealer (deekon off  
 a chutch maybe) a rigin' himself out in the Weigh they  
 du and struttin' round in the Reign aspillin' his trowsis  
 and makin' wet goods of himself. Ef any thin's fool-  
 isher and moor dicklus than militerry gloary it is mi-  
 lishy gloary. — H. B.

<sup>2</sup> these fellers are verry proppilly called Rank

Throughout is swarmin' with the most  
 alarmin' kind o' varmin.  
 He talked about delishis froot, but then  
 it wuz a wopper all,  
 The holl on 't 's mud an' prickly pears,  
 with here an' there a chapparal;  
 You see a feller peekin' out, an', fust you  
 know, a lariat  
 Is round your throat an' you a copse, 'fore  
 you can say, "Wut air ye at?"<sup>2</sup>  
 You never see sech darned gret bugs (it  
 may not be irrelevant  
 To say I've seen a *scarabæus pilularius*<sup>3</sup>  
 big ez a year old elephant),  
 The rigiment come up one day in time to  
 stop a red bug  
 From runnin' off with Cunnle Wright,— 't  
 wuz jest a common *cimex lectularius*.

One night I started up on eend an' thought  
 I wuz to hum agin,  
 I heern a horn, thinks I it 's Sol the fisher-  
 man hez come agin,  
*His* bellowses is sound enough,— ez I 'm a  
 livin' creeter,  
 I felt a thing go thru my leg,— 't wuz  
 nothin' more 'n a skeeter!  
 Then there 's the yaller fever, tu, they call  
 it here el vomito,—  
 (Come, thet wun't du, you landerab there,  
 I tell ye to le' go my toe!  
 My gracious! it's a scorpion thet 's took  
 a shine to play with 't,  
 I darsn't skeer the tarnal thing fer fear  
 he 'd run away with 't.)  
 Afore I come away from hum I hed a  
 strong persuasion  
 Thet Mexicans worn't human beans,<sup>4</sup>— an  
 ourang outang nation,  
 A sort o' folks a chap could kill an' never  
 dream on 't arter,  
 No more 'n a feller 'd dream o' pigs thet  
 he hed hed to slarter;  
 I 'd an idee thet they were built arter the  
 darkie fashion all,  
 An' kickin' colored folks about, you know,  
 's a kind o' national;

Heroes, and the more tha kill the ranker and more  
 Herowick tha bekum. — H. B.

<sup>3</sup> it wuz "tumblebug" as he Writ it, but the parson  
 put the Latten instid. I sed tother maid better meeter,  
 but he said tha was eddykated peopl to Boston and tha  
 would n't stan' it no how. idnow as tha wood and  
 idnow as tha wood. — H. B.

<sup>4</sup> he means human beins, that 's wut he means. i  
 spose he kinder thought tha wuz human beans ware  
 the Xisle Poles comes from. — H. B.

But wen I jined I worn't so wise ez thet  
 air queen o' Sheby,  
 Fer, come to look at 'em, they aint much  
 diff'rent from wut we be,  
 An' here we air ascringin' 'em out o' thir  
 own dominions,  
 Ashelterin' 'em, ez Caleb sez, under our  
 eagle's pinions,  
 Wich means to take a feller up jest by the  
 slack o' 's trowsis  
 An' walk him Spanish clean right out o'  
 all his homes an' houses;  
 Wal, it doos seem a curus way, but then  
 hooraw fer Jackson !  
 It must be right, fer Caleb sez it 's reg'lar  
 Anglo-saxon.  
 The Mex'cans don't fight fair, they say,  
 they piz'n all the water,  
 An' du amazin' lots o' things thet is n't  
 wut they ough' to;  
 Bein' they haint no lead, they make their  
 bullets out o' copper  
 An' shoot the darned things at us, tu, wich  
 Caleb sez aint proper;  
 He sez they 'd ough' to stan' right up an'  
 let us pop 'em fairly  
 (Guess wen he ketches 'em at thet he 'll  
 hev to git up airly),  
 Thet our nation 's bigger 'n theirn an' so  
 its rights air bigger,  
 An' thet it 's all to make 'em free thet we  
 air pullin' trigger,  
 Thet Anglo Saxondom's idee 's abreakin'  
 'em to pieces,  
 An' thet idee 's thet every man doos jest  
 wut he damn pleases;  
 Ef I don't make his meanin' clear, perhaps  
 in some respex I can,  
 I know thet "every man" don't mean a  
 nigger or a Mexican;  
 An' there 's another thing I know, an' thet  
 is, ef these creeturs,  
 Thet stick an Anglo-saxon mask onto State-  
 prison feeturs,  
 Should come to Jaalam Centre fer to  
 argify an' spout on 't,  
 The gals 'ould count the silver spoons the  
 minnit they cleared out on 't.  
 This goin' ware glory waits ye haint one  
 agreeable feetur,  
 An' ef it worn't fer wakin' snakes, I 'd  
 home agin short meter;  
 O, would n't I be off, quick time, ef  
 't worn't thet I wuz sartin

They 'd let the daylight into me to pay me  
 fer desartin !  
 I don't approve o' tellin' tales, but jest to  
 you I may state  
 Our ossifiers aint wut they wuz afore they  
 left the Bay-state;  
 Then it wuz "Mister Sawin, sir, you 're  
 middlin' well now, be ye ?  
 Step up an' take a nipper, sir; I 'm dreflle  
 glad to see ye ;"  
 But now it 's "Ware 's my eppylet ? here,  
 Sawin, step an' fetch it !  
 An' mind your eye, be thund'rin' spry, or,  
 damn ye, you shall ketch it !"  
 Wal, ez the Doctor sez, some pork will bile  
 so, but by mighty,  
 Ef I hed some on 'em to hum, I 'd give  
 'em linkum vity,  
 I 'd play the rogue's march on their hides  
 an' other music follerin' —  
 But I must close my letter here, fer one on  
 'em 's abollerin',  
 These Anglosaxon ossifiers, — wal, taint no  
 use ajawin',  
 I 'm safe enlisted fer the war,  
 Yourn,

#### BIRDOFREDOM SAWIN.

[Those have not been wanting (as, indeed,  
 when hath Satan been to seek for attorneys ?)  
 who have maintained that our late inroad upon  
 Mexico was undertaken not so much for the  
 avenging of any national quarrel, as for the  
 spreading of free institutions and of Protestant-  
 ism. *Capita vix duabus Anticyris medenda !*  
 Verily I admire that no pious sergeant among  
 these new Crusaders beheld Martin Luther rid-  
 ing at the front of the host upon a tamed ponti-  
 fical bull, as, in that former invasion of Mexico,  
 the zealous Gomara (spawn though he were of  
 the Scarlet Woman) was favored with a vision  
 of St. James of Compostella, skewering the  
 infidels upon his apostolical lance. We read,  
 also, that Richard of the lion heart, having gone  
 to Palestine on a similar errand of mercy, was  
 divinely encouraged to cut the throats of such  
 Paynims as refused to swallow the bread of life  
 (doubtless that they might be thereafter incapa-  
 citated for swallowing the filthy gobbets of  
 Mahound) by angels of heaven, who cried to the  
 king and his knights, — *Seigneurs, tuez ! tuez !*  
 providentially using the French tongue, as  
 being the only one understood by their auditors.  
 This would argue for the pantoglottism of these  
 celestial intelligences, while, on the other hand,  
 the Devil, *teste* Cotton Mather, is unversed in  
 certain of the Indian dialects. Yet must he be  
 a semeiologist the most expert, making himself  
 intelligible to every people and kindred by  
 signs ; no other discourse, indeed, being needful,  
 than such as the mackerel-fisher holds with his  
 finned quarry, who, if other bait be wanting,



can by a bare bit of white rag at the end of a string captivate those foolish fishes. Such piscatorial persuasion is Satan cunning in. Before one he trails a hat and feather, or a bare feather without a hat; before another, a Presidential chair or a tide-waiter's stool, or a pulpit in the city, no matter what. To us, dangling there over our heads, they seem junkets dropped out of the seventh heaven, sops dipped in nectar, but, once in our mouths, they are all one, bits of fuzzy cotton.

This, however, by the way. It is time now *revocare gradum*. While so many miracles of this sort, vouched by eye-witnesses, have encouraged the arms of Papists, not to speak of Echetaüs at Marathon and those *Dioscuri* (whom we must conclude imps of the pit) who sundry times captained the pagan Roman soldiery, it is strange that our first American crusade was not in some such wise also signalized. Yet it is said that the Lord hath manifestly prospered our armies. This opens the question, whether, when our hands are strengthened to make great slaughter of our enemies, it be absolutely and demonstratively certain that this might is added to us from above, or whether some Potentate from an opposite quarter may not have a finger in it, as there are few pies into which his meddling digits are not thrust. Would the Sanctifier and Setter-apart of the seventh day have assisted in a victory gained on the Sabbath, as was one in the late war? Do we not know from Josephus, that, careful of His decree, a certain river in Judæa abstained from flowing on the day of Rest? Or has that day become less an object of His especial care since the year 1697, when so manifest a providence occurred to Mr. William Trowbridge, in answer to whose prayers, when he and all on shipboard with him were starving, a dolphin was sent daily, "which was enough to serve 'em; only on *Saturdays* they still caught a couple, and on the *Lord's Days* they could catch none at all"? Haply they might have been permitted, by way of mortification, to take some few sculpins (those banes of the salt-water angler), which unseemly fish would, moreover, have conveyed to them a symbolical reproof for their breach of the day, being known in the rude dialect of our mariners as *Cape Cod Clergymen*.

It has been a refreshment to many nice consciences to know that our Chief Magistrate would not regard with eyes of approval the (by many esteemed) sinful pastime of dancing, and I own myself to be so far of that mind, that I could not but set my face against this Mexican Polka, though danced to the Presidential piping with a Gubernatorial second. If ever the country should be seized with another such mania *pro propaganda fide*, I think it would be wise to fill our bombshells with alternate copies of the Cambridge Platform and the Thirty-nine Articles, which would produce a mixture of the highest explosive power, and to wrap every one of our cannon-balls in a leaf of the New Testament, the reading of which is denied to those

who sit in the darkness of Popery. Those iron evangelists would thus be able to disseminate vital religion and Gospel truth in quarters inaccessible to the ordinary missionary. I have seen lads, unimpregnate with the more sublimated punctiliousness of Walton, secure pickerel, taking their unwary *siesta* beneath the lily-pads too nigh the surface, with a gun and small shot. Why not, then, since gunpowder was unknown in the time of the Apostles (not to enter here upon the question whether it were discovered before that period by the Chinese), suit our metaphor to the age in which we live, and say *shooters* as well as *fishers* of men?

I do much fear that we shall be seized now and then with a Protestant fervor, as long as we have neighbor Naboths whose wallowings in Papistical mire excite our horror in exact proportion to the size and desirableness of their vineyards. Yet I rejoice that some earnest Protestants have been made by this war,—I mean those who protested against it. Fewer they were than I could wish, for one might imagine America to have been colonized by a tribe of those nondescript African animals the Aye-Ayes, so difficult a word is *No* to us all. There is some malformation or defect of the vocal organs, which either prevents our uttering it at all, or gives it so thick a pronunciation as to be unintelligible. A mouth filled with the national pudding, or watering in expectation thereof, is wholly incompetent to this refractory monosyllable. An abject and herpetie Public Opinion is the Pope, the Anti-Christ, for us to protest against *e corde cordium*. And by what College of Cardinals is this our God's-vicear, our binder and looser, elected? Very like, by the sacred conclave of Tag, Rag, and Bobtail, in the gracious atmosphere of the grog-shop. Yet it is of this that we must all be puppets. This thumps the pulpit-cushion, this guides the editor's pen, this wags the senator's tongue. This decides what Scriptures are canonical, and shuffles Christ away into the Apocrypha. According to that sentence fathered upon Solon, *ὁὕτω δημόσιον κακὸν ἔρχεται οἰκαδ' ἐκάστην*, This unclean spirit is skilful to assume various shapes. I have known it to enter my own study and nudge my elbow of a Saturday, under the semblance of a wealthy member of my congregation. It were a great blessing, if every particular of what in the sum we call popular sentiment could carry about the name of its manufacturer stamped legibly upon it. I gave a stab under the fifth rib to that pestilent fallacy,—"Our country, right or wrong,"—by tracing its original to a speech of Ensign Cilley at a dinner of the Bungtown Fencibles.—H. W.]

### NO. III

### WHAT MR. ROBINSON THINKS

[A FEW remarks on the following verses will not be out of place. The satire in them was not meant to have any personal, but only a

general, application. Of the gentleman upon whose letter they were intended as a commentary Mr. Biglow had never heard, till he saw the letter itself. The position of the satirist is oftentimes one which he would not have chosen, had the election been left to himself. In attacking bad principles, he is obliged to select some individual who has made himself their exponent, and in whom they are impersonate, to the end that what he says may not, through ambiguity, be dissipated *tenuis in auras*. For what says Seneca? *Longum iter per præcepta, breve et efficace per exempla*. A bad principle is comparatively harmless while it continues to be an abstraction, nor can the general mind comprehend it fully till it is printed in that large type which all men can read at sight, namely, the life and character, the sayings and doings, of particular persons. It is one of the cunningest fetches of Satan, that he never exposes himself directly to our arrows, but, still dodging behind this neighbor or that acquaintance, compels us to wound him through them, if at all. He holds our affections as hostages, the while he patches up a truce with our conscience.

Meanwhile, let us not forget that the aim of the true satirist is not to be severe upon persons, but only upon falsehood, and, as Truth and Falsehood start from the same point, and sometimes even go along together for a little way, his business is to follow the path of the latter after it diverges, and to show her floundering in the bog at the end of it. Truth is quite beyond the reach of satire. There is so brave a simplicity in her, that she can no more be made ridiculous than an oak or a pine. The danger of the satirist is, that continual use may deaden his sensibility to the force of language. He becomes more and more liable to strike harder than he knows or intends. He may be careful to put on his boxing-gloves, and yet forget that, the older they grow, the more plainly may the knuckles inside be felt. Moreover, in the heat of contest, the eye is insensibly drawn to the crown of victory, whose tawdry tinsel glitters through that dust of the ring which obscures Truth's wreath of simple leaves. I have sometimes thought that my young friend, Mr. Biglow, needed a monitory hand laid on his arm, — *aliquid sufflaminandum erat*. I have never thought it good husbandry to water the tender plants of reform with *aqua fortis*, yet, where so much is to do in the beds, he were a sorry gardener who should wage a whole day's war with an iron scuffle on those ill weeds that make the garden-walks of life unsightly, when a sprinkle of Attie salt will wither them up. *Est ars etiam maledicendi*, says Scaliger, and truly it is a hard thing to say where the graceful gentleness of the lamb merges in downright sheepishness. We may conclude with worthy and wise Dr. Fuller, that "one may be a lamb in private wrongs, but in hearing general affronts to goodness they are asses which are not lions." — H. W.]

GUVERNER B. is a sensible man;

He stays to his home an' looks arter his folks;

He draws his furrer ez straight ez he can,  
An' into nobody's tater-patch pokes;

But John P.

Robinson he

Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.

My! aint it terrible? Wut shall we du?

We can't never choose him o' course, —  
thet's flat;

Guess we shall hev to come round, (don't  
you?)

An' go in fer thunder an' guns, an' all  
that;

Fer John P.

Robinson he

Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B.

General C. is a drefle smart man:

He's ben on all sides thet give places or  
pelf;

But consistency still wuz a part of his  
plan, —

He's ben true to *one* party, — an' thet is  
himself; —

So John P.

Robinson he

Sez he shall vote fer General C.

General C. he goes in fer the war;

He don't vally princerples more 'n an old  
cud;

Wut did God make us raytional creeturs fer,  
But glory an' gunpowder, plunder an'  
blood?

So John P.

Robinson he

Sez he shall vote fer General C.

We were gittin' on nicely up here to our  
village,

With good old idees o' wut's right an'  
wut aint,

We kind o' thought Christ went agin war  
an' pillage,

An' thet eppyletts worn't the best mark  
of a saint;

But John P.

Robinson he

Sez this kind o' thing's an exploded  
idee.

The side of our country must o'lers be took,  
An' Presidnt Polk, you know, *he* is our  
country.

An' the angel thet writes all our sins in a  
book

Puts the *debit* to him, an' to us the *per*  
*contry*;

An' John P.

Robinson he

Sez this is his view o' the thing to a T.

Parson Wilbur he calls all these argimunts  
lies;

Sez they're nothin' on airth but jest *fee*,  
*faw, fum*;

An' thet all this big talk of our destinies

Is half on it ign'ance, an' t'other half  
rum;

But John P.

Robinson he

Sez it aint no sech thing; an', of course,  
so must we.

Parson Wilbur sez *he* never heerd in his life  
Thet th' Apostles rigged out in their  
swaller-tail coats,

An' marched round in front of a drum an'  
a fife,

To git some on 'em office, an' some on 'em  
votes;

But John P.

Robinson he

Sez they did n't know everythin' down  
in Judee.

Wal, it's a marey we've gut folks to tell us  
The rights an' the wrongs o' these mat-  
ters, I vow, —

God sends country lawyers, an' other wise  
fellers,

To start the world's team wen it gits in a  
slough;

Fer John P.

Robinson he

Sez the world 'll go right, ef he hollers  
out Gee!

[The attentive reader will doubtless have perceived in the foregoing poem an allusion to that pernicious sentiment, — "Our country, right or wrong." It is an abuse of language to call a certain portion of land, much more, certain personages, elevated for the time being to high station, our country. I would not sever nor loosen a single one of those ties by which we are united to the spot of our birth, nor minish by a tittle the respect due to the Magistrate. I love our

own Bay State too well to do the one, and as for the other, I have myself for nigh forty years exercised, however unworthily, the function of Justice of the Peace, having been called thereto by the unsolicited kindness of that most excellent man and upright patriot, Caleb Strong. *Patriæ fumus igne alieno luculentior* is best qualified with this, — *Ubi libertas, ibi patria*. We are inhabitants of two worlds, and owe a double, but not a divided, allegiance. In virtue of our clay, this little ball of earth exacts a certain loyalty of us, while, in our capacity as spirits, we are admitted citizens of an invisible and holier fatherland. There is a patriotism of the soul whose claim absolves us from our other and terrene fealty. Our true country is that ideal realm which we represent to ourselves under the names of religion, duty, and the like. Our terrestrial organizations are but far-off approaches to so fair a model, and all they are verily traitors who resist not any attempt to divert them from this their original intentment. When, therefore, one would have us to fling up our caps and shout with the multitude, — "*Our country, however bounded!*" he demands of us that we sacrifice the larger to the less, the higher to the lower, and that we yield to the imaginary claims of a few acres of soil our duty and privilege as liegemen of Truth. Our true country is bounded on the north and the south, on the east and the west, by Justice, and when she oversteps that invisible boundary-line by so much as a hair's-breadth, she ceases to be our mother, and chooses rather to be looked upon *quasi noverca*. That is a hard choice when our earthly love of country calls upon us to tread one path and our duty points us to another. We must make as noble and becoming an election as did Penelope between Icarus and Ulysses. Veiling our faces, we must take silently the hand of Duty to follow her.

Shortly after the publication of the foregoing poem, there appeared some comments upon it in one of the public prints which seemed to call for animadversion. I accordingly addressed to Mr. Buckingham, of the Boston Courier, the following letter.

"JAAALAM, November 4, 1847.

"To the Editor of the Courier :

"RESPECTED SIR, — Calling at the post-office this morning, our worthy and efficient postmaster offered for my perusal a paragraph in the Boston Morning Post of the 3d instant, wherein certain effusions of the pastoral muse are attributed to the pen of Mr. James Russell Lowell. For aught I know or can affirm to the contrary, this Mr. Lowell may be a very deserving person and a youth of parts (though I have seen verses of his which I could never rightly understand); and if he be such, he, I am certain, as well as I, would be free from any proclivity to appropriate to himself whatever of credit (or discredit) may honestly belong to another. I am confident, that, in penning these few lines, I am only forestalling a disclaimer from that young gentleman, whose



silence hitherto, when rumor pointed to him-ward, has excited in my bosom mingled emotions of sorrow and surprise. Well may my young parishioner, Mr. Biglow, exclaim with the poet,

“‘*Sic vos non vobis,*’ &c.;

though, in saying this, I would not convey the impression that he is a proficient in the Latin tongue,—the tongue, I might add, of a Horace and a Tully.

“Mr. B. does not employ his pen, I can safely say, for any lucre of worldly gain, or to be exalted by the carnal plaudits of men, *digito monstrari*, &c. He does not wait upon Providence for mercies, and in his heart mean *merces*. But I should esteem myself as verily deficient in my duty (who am his friend and in some unworthy sort his spiritual *fidus Achates*, &c.), if I did not step forward to claim for him whatever measure of applause might be assigned to him by the judicious.

“If this were a fitting occasion, I might venture here a brief dissertation touching the manner and kind of my young friend’s poetry. But I dubitate whether this abstruser sort of speculation (though enlivened by some apposite instances from Aristophanes) would sufficiently interest your oppidan readers. As regards their satirical tone, and their plainness of speech, I will only say, that, in my pastoral experience, I have found that the Arch-Enemy loves nothing better than to be treated as a religious, moral, and intellectual being, and that there is no *apage Sathanas!* so potent as ridicule. But it is a kind of weapon that must have a button of good-nature on the point of it.

“The productions of Mr. B. have been stigmatized in some quarters as unpatric; but I can vouch that he loves his native soil with that hearty, though discriminating, attachment which springs from an intimate social intercourse of many years’ standing. In the ploughing season, no one has a deeper share in the well-being of the country than he. If Dean Swift were right in saying that he who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before confers a greater benefit on the state than he who taketh a city, Mr. B. might exhibit a fairer claim to the Presidency than General Scott himself. I think that some of those disinterested lovers of the hard-handed democracy, whose fingers have never touched anything rougher than the dollars of our common country, would hesitate to compare palms with him. It would do your heart good, respected Sir, to see that young man mow. He cuts a cleaner and wider swath than any in this town.

“But it is time for me to be at my Post. It is very clear that my young friend’s shot has struck the lintel, for the Post is shaken (Amos ix, 1). The editor of that paper is a strenuous advocate of the Mexican war, and a colonel, as I am given to understand. I presume, that, being necessarily absent in Mexico, he has left his journal in some less judicious hands. At any rate, the Post has been too swift on this

occasion. It could hardly have cited a more incontrovertible line from any poem than that which it has selected for animadversion, namely,—

“‘We kind o’ thought Christ went agin war an’ pillage.’

“If the Post maintains the converse of this proposition, it can hardly be considered as a safe guide-post for the moral and religious portions of its party, however many other excellent qualities of a post it may be blessed with. There is a sign in London on which is painted,—‘The Green Man.’ It would do very well as a portrait of any individual who should support so unscriptural a thesis. As regards the language of the line in question, I am bold to say that He who readeth the hearts of men will not account any dialect unseemly which conveys a sound and pious sentiment. I could wish that such sentiments were more common, however uncouthly expressed. Saint Ambrose affirms, that *veritas a quocunque* (why not, then, *quomodocunque?*) *dicatur, a spiritu sancto est*. Digest also this of Baxter: ‘The plainest words are the most profitable oratory in the weightiest matters.’

“When the paragraph in question was shown to Mr. Biglow, the only part of it which seemed to give him any dissatisfaction was that which classed him with the Whig party. He says, that, if resolutions are a nourishing kind of diet, that party must be in a very hearty and flourishing condition; for that they have quietly eaten more good ones of their own baking than he could have conceived to be possible without repletion. He has been for some years past (I regret to say) an ardent opponent of those sound doctrines of protective policy which form so prominent a portion of the creed of that party. I confess, that, in some discussions which I have had with him on this point in my study, he has displayed a vein of obstinacy which I had not hitherto detected in his composition. He is also (*horresco referens*) infected in no small measure with the peculiar notions of a print called the *Liberator*, whose heresies I take every proper opportunity of combating, and of which, I thank God, I have never read a single line.

“I did not see Mr. B.’s verses until they appeared in print, and there is certainly one thing in them which I consider highly improper. I allude to the personal references to myself by name. To confer notoriety on an humble individual who is laboring quietly in his vocation, and who keeps his cloth as free as he can from the dust of the political arena (though *ex mihi si non evangelizavero*), is no doubt an indecorum. The sentiments which he attributes to me I will not deny to be mine. They were embodied, though in a different form, in a discourse preached upon the last day of public fasting, and were acceptable to my entire people (of whatever political views), except the postmaster, who dissented *ex officio*. I observe that you sometimes devote a portion of your paper to a religious summary. I should be



well pleased to furnish a copy of my discourse for insertion in this department of your instructive journal. By omitting the advertisements, it might easily be got within the limits of a single number, and I venture to insure you the sale of some scores of copies in this town. I will cheerfully render myself responsible for ten. It might possibly be advantageous to issue it as an *extra*. But perhaps you will not esteem it an object, and I will not press it. My offer does not spring from any weak desire of seeing my name in print; for I can enjoy this satisfaction at any time by turning to the Triennial Catalogue of the University, where it also possesses that added emphasis of Italics with which those of my calling are distinguished.

"I would simply add, that I continue to fit ingenuous youth for college, and that I have two spacious and airy sleeping apartments at this moment unoccupied. *Ingenuas didicisse*, &c. Terms, which vary according to the circumstances of the parents, may be known on application to me by letter, post-paid. In all cases the lad will be expected to fetch his own towels. This rule, Mrs. W. desires me to add, has no exceptions.

"Respectfully, your obedient servant,

"HOMER WILBUR, A. M.

"P. S. Perhaps the last paragraph may look like an attempt to obtain the insertion of my circular gratuitously. If it should appear to you in that light, I desire that you would erase it, or charge for it at the usual rates, and deduct the amount from the proceeds in your hands from the sale of my discourse, when it shall be printed. My circular is much longer and more explicit, and will be forwarded without charge to any who may desire it. It has been very neatly executed on a letter sheet, by a very deservng printer, who attends upon my ministry, and is a creditable specimen of the typographic art. I have one hung over my mantelpiece in a neat frame, where it makes a beautiful and appropriate ornament, and balances the profile of Mrs. W., cut with her toes, by the young lady born without arms.

"H. W."

I have in the foregoing letter mentioned General Scott in connection with the Presidency, because I have been given to understand that he has blown to pieces and otherwise caused to be destroyed more Mexicans than any other commander. His claim would therefore be deservedly considered the strongest. Until accurate returns of the Mexicans killed, wounded, and maimed be obtained, it will be difficult to settle these nice points of precedence. Should it prove that any other officer has been more meritorious and destructive than General S., and has thereby rendered himself more worthy of the confidence and support of the conservative portion of our community, I shall cheerfully insert his name, instead of that of General S., in a future edition. It may be thought, like-

wise, that General S. has invalidated his claims by too much attention to the decencies of apparel, and the habits belonging to a gentleman. These abstruser points of statesmanship are beyond my scope. I wonder not that successful military achievement should attract the admiration of the multitude. Rather do I rejoice with wonder to behold how rapidly this sentiment is losing its hold upon the popular mind. It is related of Thomas Warton, the second of that honored name who held the office of Poetry Professor at Oxford, that, when one wished to find him, being absconded, as was his wont, in some obscure alehouse, he was counselled to traverse the city with a drum and fife, the sound of which inspiring music would be sure to draw the Doctor from his retirement into the street. We are all more or less bitten with this martial insanity. *Nescio qua dulcedine . . . cunctos ducit*. I confess to some infection of that itch myself. When I see a Brigadier-General maintaining his insecure elevation in the saddle under the severe fire of the training-field, and when I remember that some military enthusiasts, through haste, inexperience, or an over-desire to lend reality to those fictitious combats, will sometimes discharge their ramrods, I cannot but admire, while I deplore, the mistaken devotion of those heroic officers. *Semel insanivimus omnes*. I was myself, during the late war with Great Britain, chaplain of a regiment, which was fortunately never called to active military duty. I mention this circumstance with regret rather than pride. Had I been summoned to actual warfare, I trust that I might have been strengthened to bear myself after the manner of that reverend father in our New England Israel, Dr. Benjamin Colman, who, as we are told in Turrell's life of him, when the vessel in which he had taken passage for England was attacked by a French privateer, "fought like a philosopher and a Christian, . . . and prayed all the while he charged and fired." As this note is already long, I shall not here enter upon a discussion of the question, whether Christians may lawfully be soldiers. I think it sufficiently evident, that, during the first two centuries of the Christian era, at least, the two professions were esteemed incompatible. Consult Jortin on this head. — H. W.]

#### NO. IV

#### REMARKS OF INCREASE D. O'PHACE, ESQUIRE,

AT AN EXTRUMPERY CAUCUS IN STATE  
STREET, REPORTED BY MR. H. BIG-  
LOW

[THE ingenious reader will at once understand that no such speech as the following was ever *totidem verbis* pronounced. But there are simpler and less guarded wits, for the satisfying of which

such an explanation may be needful. For there are certain invisible lines, which as Truth successively overpasses, she becomes Untruth to one and another of us, as a large river, flowing from one kingdom into another, sometimes takes a new name, albeit the waters undergo no change, how small soever. There is, moreover, a truth of fiction more veracious than the truth of fact, as that of the Poet, which represents to us things and events as they ought to be, rather than servilely copies them as they are imperfectly imaged in the crooked and smoky glass of our mundane affairs. It is this which makes the speech of Antonius, though originally spoken in no wider a forum than the brain of Shakespeare, more historically valuable than that other which Appian has reported, by as much as the understanding of the Englishman was more comprehensive than that of the Alexandrian. Mr. Biglow, in the present instance, has only made use of a license assumed by all the historians of antiquity, who put into the mouths of various characters such words as seem to them most fitting to the occasion and to the speaker. If it be objected that no such oration could ever have been delivered, I answer, that there are few assemblages for speech-making which do not better deserve the title of *Parliamentum Indocorum* than did the sixth Parliament of Henry the Fourth, and that men still continue to have as much faith in the Oracle of Fools as ever Pantagruel had. Howell, in his letters, recounts a merry tale of a certain ambassador of Queen Elizabeth, who, having written two letters, — one to her Majesty, and the other to his wife, — directed them at cross-purposes, so that the Queen was beducked and bedeaded and requested to send a change of hose, and the wife was beprincessed and otherwise unwontedly besuperlative, till the one feared for the wits of her ambassador, and the other for those of her husband. In like manner it may be presumed that our speaker has misdirected some of his thoughts, and given to the whole theatre what he would have wished to confide only to a select auditory at the back of the curtain. For it is seldom that we can get any frank utterance from men, who address, for the most part, a Buncombe either in this world or the next. As for their audiences, it may be truly said of our people, that they enjoy one political institution in common with the ancient Athenians: I mean a certain profitless kind of *ostracism*, wherewith, nevertheless, they seem hitherto well enough content. For in Presidential elections, and other affairs of the sort, whereas I observe that the *oysters* fall to the lot of comparatively few, the *shells* (such as the privileges of voting as they are told to do by the *ostrivori* aforesaid, and of huzzaing at public meetings) are very liberally distributed among

the people, as being their prescriptive and quite sufficient portion.

The occasion of the speech is supposed to be Mr. Palfrey's refusal to vote for the Whig candidate for the Speakership. — H. W.]

No? Hez he? He haint, though? Wut?  
Voted agin him?

Ef the bird of our country could ketch him,  
she'd skin him;

I seem 's though I see her, with wrath in  
each quill,

Like a chancery lawyer, aflin' her bill,  
An' grindin' her talents ez sharp ez all  
nater,

To pounce like a writ on the back o' the  
traitor.

Forgive me, my friends, ef I seem to be het,  
But a crisis like this must with vigor be  
met;

Wen an Arnold the star-spangled banner  
bestains,

Holl Fourth o' Julys seem to bile in my  
veins.

Who ever'd ha' thought sech a pisonous rig  
Would be run by a chap thet wuz chose fer  
a Wig?

"We knowed wut his princerples wuz 'fore  
we sent him"?

Wut wuz there in them from this vote to  
pervent him?

A marceiful Providence fashioned us holler  
O' purpose thet we might our princerples  
swaller;

It can hold any quantity on 'em, the belly  
can,

An' bring 'em up ready fer use like the  
pelican,

Or more like the kangaroo, who (wich is  
stranger)

Puts her family into her pouch wen there's  
danger.

Aint princerpel precious? then, who's  
goin' to use it

Wen there's resk o' some chap's gittin' up  
to abuse it?

I can't tell the wy on't, but nothin' is so  
sure

Ez thet princerpel kind o' gits spiled by  
exposure;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The speaker is of a different mind from Tully, who, in his recently discovered tractate *De Republica*, tells us, *Nec vero habere virtutem satis est, quasi artem aliquam, nisi utare*, and from our Milton, who says: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, un-

exercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." — *Areop.* He had taken the words out of the Roman's mouth, without knowing it, and might well

A man thet lets all sorts o' folks git a sight  
on 't  
Ough' to hev it all took right away, every  
mite on 't;  
Ef he can't keep it all to himself wen it 's  
wise to,  
He aint one it's fit to trust nothin' so nice to.

Besides, ther 's a wonderful power in lati-  
tude

To shift a man's morril relations an' atti-  
tude;

Some flossifiers think thet a fakkilty 's  
granted

The minnit it 's proved to be thoroughly  
wanted,

Thet a change o' demand makes a change  
o' condition,

An' thet everythin' 's nothin' except by  
position;

Ez, fer instance, thet rubber-trees fust be-  
gun bearin'

Wen plitikle consunnces come into wear-  
in',

Thet the fears of a monkey, whose holt  
chanced to fail,

Drawed the vertibry out to a prehensile  
tail;

So, wen one 's chose to Congriss, ez soon ez  
he 's in it,

A collar grows right round his neck in a  
minnit,

An' sartin it is thet a man cannot be strict  
In bein' himself, wen he gits to the Dees-  
trict,

Fer a coat thet sets wal here in ole Massa-  
chusetts,

Wen it gits on to Washinton, somehow  
askew sets.

Resolves, do you say, o' the Springfield  
Convention?

Thet 's percise the pint I was goin' to  
mention;

Resolves air a thing we most gen'ally keep  
ill,

They 're a cheap kind 'o dust fer the eyes  
o' the people;

A parcel o' delligits jest git together

An' chat fer a spell o' the crops an' the  
weather,

Then, comin' to order, they squabble awile  
An' let off the speeches they 're ferful 'll  
spile;

Then — Resolve, — Thet we wunt hev an  
inch o' slave territory;

Thet Presidunt Polk's holl perceedins air  
very tory;

Thet the war is a damned war, an' them  
thet enlist in it

Should hev a cravat with a dreffle tight  
twist in it;

Thet the war is a war fer the spreadin' o'  
slavery;

Thet our army desarves our best thanks  
fer their bravery;

Thet we 're the original friends o' the  
nation,

All the rest air a paltry an' base fabrica-  
tion;

Thet we highly respect Messrs. A, B,  
an' C,

An' ez deeply despise Messrs. E, F, an' G.  
In this way they go to the eend o' the  
chapter,

An' then they bust out in a kind of a rap-  
tur

About their own vartoo, an' folks's stone-  
blindness

To the men thet 'ould actilly do 'em a  
kindness, —

The American eagle, — the Pilgrims thet  
landed, —

Till on ole Plymouth Rock they git finally  
stranded.

Wal, the people they listen an' say, "Thet 's  
the ticket;

Ez fer Mexico, 't aint no great glory to  
lick it,

But 't would be a darned shame to go pull-  
in' o' triggers

To extend the aree of abusin' the nig-  
gers."

So they march in percession, an' git up  
hooraws,

An' tramp thru the mud fer the good o' the  
cause,

An' think they 're a kind o' fulfillin' the  
prophecies,

Wen they 're on'y jest changin' the holders  
of offices;

Ware A sot afore, B is comf'tably seated,  
One humbug 's victor'ous an' t' other de-  
feated,

exclaim with Donatus (if Saint Jerome's tutor may  
stand sponsor for a curse), *Pereant qui ante nos nostra  
dixerint!* — H. W.

Each honorable doughface gits jest wut he  
axes,  
An' the people, — their annooal soft-sodder  
an' taxes.

Now, to keep unimpaired all these glorious  
feeturs  
Thet characterize morril an' reasonin' cree-  
turs,  
Thet give every paytriot all he can cram,  
Thet oust the untrustworthy Presidunt  
Flam,  
An' stick honest Presidunt Sham in his  
place,  
To the manifest gain o' the holl human  
race,  
An' to some indervidgewals on 't in par-  
tickler,  
Who love Public Opinion an' know how to  
tickle her, —  
I say thet a party with gret aims like these  
Must stick jest ez close ez a hive full o'  
bees.

I 'm willin' a man should go tollable strong  
Agin wrong in the abstract, fer thet kind  
o' wrong  
Is ollers unpop'lar an' never gits pitied,  
Because it 's a crime no one never com-  
mitted;  
But he mus' n't be hard on partickler sins,  
Coz then he'll be kickin' the people's own  
shins;  
On'y look at the Demmercrats, see wut  
they 've done  
Jest simply by stickin' together like fun;  
They 've sucked us right into a mis'able  
war  
Thet no one on airth aint responsible for;  
They 've run us a hundred cool millions in  
debt  
(An' fer Demmererat Horners ther 's good  
plums left yet);  
They talk agin tayriffs, but act fer a high  
one,  
An' so coax all parties to build up their  
Zion;  
To the people they 're ollers ez slick ez mo-  
lasses,  
An' butter their bread on both sides with  
The Masses,  
Half o' whom they 've persuaded, by way  
of a joke,  
Thet Washinton's mantelpiece fell upon  
Polk.

Now all o' these blessin's the Wigs might  
enjoy,  
Ef they 'd gumption enough the right means  
to imploy;<sup>1</sup>  
Fer the silver spoon born in Dermoc'acy's  
mouth  
Is a kind of a seringe thet they hev to the  
South;  
Their masters can cuss 'em an' kick 'em an'  
wale 'em,  
An' they notice it less 'an the ass did to Ba-  
laam;  
In this way they screw into second-rate  
offices  
Wich the slaveholder thinks 'ould substract  
too much off his ease;  
The file-leaders, I mean, du, fer they, by  
their wiles,  
Unlike the old viper, grow fat on their files.  
Wal, the Wigs hev been tryin' to grab all  
this prey frum 'em  
An' to hook this nice spoon o' good fortin'  
away frum 'em,  
An' they might ha' succeeded, ez likely ez  
not,  
In lickin' the Demmercrats all round the  
lot,  
Ef it warn't the't, wile all faithful Wigs  
were their knees on,  
Some stuffy old codger would holler out, —  
"Treason!  
You must keep a sharp eye on a dog thet  
hez bit you once,  
An' I aint agoin' to cheat my constitoo-  
unts," —  
Wen every fool knows thet a man repre-  
sents  
Not the fellers thet sent him, but them on  
the fence, —  
Impartially ready to jump either side  
An' make the fust use of a turn o' the  
tide, —  
The waiters on Providence here in the city,  
Who compose wut they call a State Centerl  
Committy.  
Constitoounts air hendy to help a man in,  
But arterwards don't weigh the heft of a  
pin.  
Wy, the people can't all live on Uncle Sam's  
pus,  
So they 've nothin' to du with 't fer better  
or wus;

<sup>1</sup> That was a pithy saying of Persius, and fits our politicians without a wrinkle, — *Magister artis, ingenuitque largitor venter.* — H. W.



It's the folks thet air kind o' brought up  
to depend on 't  
Thet hev any consarn in 't, an' thet is the  
end on 't.  
Now here wuz New England ahevin' the  
honor  
Of a chance at the Speakership showered  
upon her;—  
Do you say, "She don't want no more  
Speakers, but fewer;  
She's hed plenty o' them, wut she wants is  
a *doer*"?  
Fer the matter o' thet, it's notorous in town  
Thet her own representatives du her quite  
brown.  
But thet's nothin' to du with it; wut right  
hed Palfrey  
To mix himself up with fanatical small  
fry?  
Warn't we gittin' on prime with our hot  
an' cold blowin',  
Acondemnin' the war wilst we kep' it  
agoin' ?  
We'd assumed with gret skill a command-  
in' position,  
On this side or thet, no one could n't tell  
wich one,  
So, wutever side wipped, we'd a chance at  
the plunder  
An' could sue fer infringin' our paytented  
thunder;  
We were ready to vote fer whoever wuz  
eligible,  
Ef on all pints at issou he'd stay unintelli-  
gible.  
Wal, sposin' we hed to gulp down our per-  
fessions,  
We were ready to come out next mornin'  
with fresh ones;  
Besides, ef we did, 't was our business alone,  
Fer could n't we du wut we would with our  
own ?  
An' ef a man can, wen pervisions hev riz so,  
Eat up his own words, it's a marcy it is so.  
Wy, these chaps frum the North, with back-  
bones to 'em, darn 'em,  
'Ould be wuth more 'an Gennle Tom Thumb  
is to Barnum:  
Ther's enough thet to office on this very  
plan grow,  
By exhibitin' how very small a man can  
grow;  
But an M. C. frum here ollers hastens to  
state he  
Belongs to the order called invertebraty,

Wence some gret filologists judge primy  
fashy  
Thet M. C. is M. T. by paronomashy;  
An' these few exceptions air *loosus naytury*  
Folks 'ould put down their quarters to stare  
at, like fury.

It's no use to open the door o' success,  
Ef a member can bolt so fer nothin' or less;  
Wy, all o' them grand constitootional pillers  
Our fore-fathers fetched with 'em over the  
billers,  
Them pillers the people so soundly hev  
slep' on,  
Wile to slav'ry, invasion, an' debt they were  
swept on,  
Wile our Destiny higher an' higher kep'  
mountin'  
(Though I guess folks 'll stare wen she  
hends her account in),  
Ef members in this way go kickin' agin' em,  
They wunt hev so much ez a feather left in  
'em.

An', ez fer this Palfrey,<sup>1</sup> we thought wen  
we'd gut him in,  
He'd go kindly in wutever harness we put  
him in;  
Supposin' we *did* know thet he wuz a peace  
man ?  
Doos he think he can be Uncle Samml's  
policeman,  
An' wen Sam gits tipsy an kicks up a riot,  
Lead him off to the lockup to snooze till  
he's quiet ?  
Wy, the war is a war thet true paytriots  
can bear, ef  
It leads to the fat promised land of a  
tayriff;  
We don't go an' fight it, nor aint to be driv  
on,  
Nor Demmercrats nuther, thet hev wut to  
live on;  
Ef it aint jest the thing thet's well pleasin'  
to God,  
It makes us thought highly on elsewhere  
abroad;  
The Rooshian black eagle looks blue in his  
eerie  
An' shakes both his heads wen he hears o'  
Monteery;  
In the Tower Victory sets, all of a fluster,

<sup>1</sup> There is truth yet in this of Juvenal, —

"Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas." — H. W.

An' reads, with locked doors, how we won  
 Cherry Buster;  
 An' old Philip Lewis—thet come an' kep'  
 school here  
 Fer the mere sake o' scorin' his ryalist  
 ruler  
 On the tenderest part of our kings in  
*futuro* —  
 Hides his crown underneath an old shut in  
 his bureau,  
 Breaks off in his brags to a suckle o' merry  
 kings,  
 How he often hed hided young native  
 Amerrikins,  
 An' turnin' quite faint in the midst of his  
 fooleries,  
 Sneaks down stairs to bolt the front door  
 o' the Tooleries.<sup>1</sup>  
 You say, "We 'd ha' scared 'em by grow-  
 in' in peace,  
 A plaguy sight more then by bobberies like  
 these" ?  
 Who is it dares say thet our naytional  
 eagle  
 Wun't much longer be classed with the  
 birds thet air regal,  
 Coz thein be hooked beaks, an' she, arter  
 this slaughter,  
 'll bring back a bill ten times longer 'n  
 she 'd ough' to ?  
 Wut 's your name ? Come, I see ye, you  
 up-country feller,  
 You 've put me out severil times with your  
 beller;  
 Out with it ! Wut ? Biglow ? I say no-  
 thin' furdur,  
 Thet feller would like nothin' better 'n a  
 murder;  
 He 's a traider, blasphemur, an' wut ruther  
 worse is,  
 He puts all his ath'ism in dreffle bad verses;  
 Society aint safe till sech monsters air out  
 on it,  
 Refer to the Post, ef you hev the least  
 doubt on it;  
 Wy, he goes agin war, agin indirect taxes,  
 Agin sellin' wild lands 'cept to settlers  
 with axes,

<sup>1</sup> Jortin is willing to allow of other miracles besides those recorded in Holy Writ, and why not of other prophecies ? It is granting too much to Satan to suppose him, as divers of the learned have done, the inspirer of the ancient oracles. Wiser, I esteem it, to give chance the credit of the successful ones. What is said here of Louis Philippe was verified in some of its minute particulars within a few months' time. Enough to have made the fortune of Delphi or Hammon, and

Agin holdin' o' slaves, though he knows  
 it 's the corner  
 Our libbaty rests on, the mis'able scorner !  
 In short, he would wholly upset with his  
 ravages  
 All thet keeps us above the brute critters  
 an' savages,  
 An' pitch into all kinds o' briles an' con-  
 fusions  
 The holl of our civerlized, free institu-  
 tions;  
 He writes fer thet ruther unsafe print, the  
 Courier,  
 An' likely ez not hez a squintin' to Foorier;  
 I 'll be —, thet is, I mean I 'll be blest,  
 Ef I hark to a word frum so noted a pest;  
 I sha'n't talk with *him*, my religion 's too  
 fervent.  
 Good mornin', my friends, I 'm your most  
 humble servant.

[Into the question whether the ability to express ourselves in articulate language has been productive of more good or evil, I shall not here enter at large. The two faculties of speech and of speech-making are wholly diverse in their natures. By the first we make ourselves intelligible, by the last unintelligible, to our fellows. It has not seldom occurred to me (noting how in our national legislature everything runs to talk, as lettuces, if the season or the soil be unpropitious, shoot up lankly to seed, instead of forming handsome heads) that Babel was the first Congress, the earliest mill erected for the manufacture of gabble. In these days, what with Town Meetings, School Committees, Boards (lumber) of one kind and another, Congresses, Parliaments, Diets, Indian Councils, Palavers, and the like, there is scarce a village which has not its factories of this description driven by milk-and-water power. I cannot conceive the confusion of tongues to have been the curse of Babel, since I esteem my ignorance of other languages as a kind of Martello-tower, in which I am safe from the furious bombardments of foreign garrulity. For this reason I have ever preferred the study of the dead languages, those primitive formations being Ararats upon whose silent peaks I sit secure and watch this new deluge without fear, though it rain figures (*simulacra*, semblances) of speech

no thanks to Beelzebub neither ! That of Seneca in Medea will suit here : —

"Rapida fortuna ac levis  
 Præcepce regno eripuit, exsilio dedit."

Let us allow, even to richly deserved misfortune, our commiseration, and be not over-hasty meanwhile in our censure of the French people, left for the first time to govern themselves, remembering that wise sentence of Æschylus, —

"Ἀπὰς δὲ τραχὺς ὅστις ἂν νέον κρατῇ. — H. W.

forty days and nights together, as it not uncommonly happens. This is my coat, as it were, without buttons by which any but a vernacular wild bore can seize me. Is it not possible that the Shakers may intend to convey a quiet reproof and hint, in fastening their outer garments with hooks and eyes?

This reflection concerning Babel, which I find in no Commentary, was first thrown upon my mind when an excellent deacon of my congregation (being infected with the Second Advent delusion) assured me that he had received a first instalment of the gift of tongues as a small earnest of larger possessions in the like kind to follow. For, of a truth, I could not reconcile it with my ideas of the Divine justice and mercy that the single wall which protected people of other languages from the incursions of this otherwise well-meaning propagandist should be broken down.

In reading Congressional debates, I have fancied, that, after the subsidence of those painful buzzings in the brain which result from such exercises, I detected a slender residuum of valuable information. I made the discovery that *nothing* takes longer in the saying than anything else, for as *ex nihilo nihil fit*, so from one polypus *nothing* any number of similar ones may be produced. I would recommend to the attention of *viva voce* debaters and controversialists the admirable example of the monk Copres, who, in the fourth century, stood for half an hour in the midst of a great fire, and thereby silenced a Manichean antagonist who had less of the salamander in him. As for those who quarrel in print, I have no concern with them here, since the eyelids are a divinely granted shield against all such. Moreover, I have observed in many modern books that the printed portion is becoming gradually smaller, and the number of blank or fly-leaves (as they are called) greater. Should this fortunate tendency of literature continue, books will grow more valuable from year to year, and the whole Serbonian bog yield to the advances of firm arable land.

The sagacious Lacedæmonians, hearing that Tesephone had bragged that he could talk all day long on any given subject, made no more ado, but forthwith banished him, whereby they supplied him a topic and at the same time took care that his experiment upon it should be tried out of earshot.

I have wondered, in the Representatives' Chamber of our own Commonwealth, to mark how little impression seemed to be produced by that emblematic fish suspended over the heads of the members. Our wiser ancestors, no doubt, hung it there as being the animal which the Pythagoreans revered for its silence, and which certainly in that particular does not so well merit the epithet *cold-blooded*, by which naturalists distinguish it, as certain bipeds, afflicted with ditch-water on the brain, who take occasion to tap themselves in Faneuil Halls, meeting-houses, and other places of public resort. — H. W.]

No. V

## THE DEBATE IN THE SENNIT

SOT TO A NUSRY RHYME

[THE incident which gave rise to the debate satirized in the following verses was the unsuccessful attempt of Drayton and Sayres to give freedom to seventy men and women, fellow-beings and fellow-Christians. Had Tripoli, instead of Washington, been the scene of this undertaking, the unhappy leaders in it would have been as secure of the theoretic as they now are of the practical part of martyrdom. I question whether the Dey of Tripoli is blessed with a District Attorney so benighted as ours at the seat of government. Very fitly is he named Key, who would allow himself to be made the instrument of locking the door of hope against sufferers in such a cause. Not all the waters of the ocean can cleanse the vile smutch of the jailer's fingers from off that little Key. *Athenæa clavis*, a brazen Key indeed!]

Mr. Calhoun, who is made the chief speaker in this burlesque, seems to think that the light of the nineteenth century is to be put out as soon as he tinkles his little cow-bell curfew. Whenever slavery is touched, he sets up his scarecrow of dissolving the Union. This may do for the North, but I should conjecture that something more than a pumpkin-lantern is required to scare manifest and irretrievable Destiny out of her path. Mr. Calhoun cannot let go the apron-string of the Past. The Past is a good nurse, but we must be weaned from her sooner or later, even though, like Plotinus, we should run home from school to ask the breast, after we are tolerably well-grown youths. It will not do for us to hide our faces in her lap, whenever the strange Future holds out her arms and asks us to come to her.

But we are all alike. We have all heard it said, often enough, that little boys must not play with fire; and yet, if the matches be taken away from us, and put out of reach upon the shelf, we must needs get into our little corner, and scowl and stamp and threaten the dire revenge of going to bed without our supper. The world shall stop till we get our dangerous plaything again. Dame Earth, meanwhile, who has more than enough household matters to mind, goes bustling hither and thither as a hiss or a sputter tells her that this or that kettle of hers is boiling over, and before bedtime we are glad to eat our porridge cold, and gulp down our dignity along with it.

Mr. Calhoun has somehow acquired the name of a great statesman, and, if it be great statesmanship to put lance in rest and run a tilt at the Spirit of the Age with the certainty of being next moment hurled neck and heels into the dust amid universal laughter, he deserves the title. He is the Sir Kay of our modern chivalry. He should remember the old Scandinavian mythus. Thor was the strongest of

gods, but he could not wrestle with Time, nor so much as lift up a fold of the great snake which bound the universe together; and when he smote the Earth, though with his terrible mallet, it was but as if a leaf had fallen. Yet all the while it seemed to Thor that he had only been wrestling with an old woman, striving to lift a cat, and striking a stupid giant on the head.

And in old times, doubtless, the giants *were* stupid, and there was no better sport for the Sir Launcelots and Sir Gawains than to go about cutting off their great blundering heads with enchanted swords. But things have wonderfully changed. It is the giants, nowadays, that have the science and the intelligence, while the chivalrous Don Quixotes of Conservatism still cumber themselves with the clumsy armor of a bygone age. On whirls the restless globe through unsounded time, with its cities and its silences, its births and funerals, half light, half shade, but never wholly dark, and sure to swing round into the happy morning at last. With an involuntary smile, one sees Mr. Calhoun letting slip his pack-thread cable with a crooked pin at the end of it to anchor South Carolina upon the bank and shoal of the Past. — H. W.]

TO MR. BUCKENAM

MR. EDITER, As i wuz kinder prunin round in a little nussry sot out a year or 2 a go, the Dbait in the sennit cum inter my mine An so i took & Sot it to wut I call a nussry rime. I hev made sum onnable Gentlemun speak thut dident speak in a Kind uv Poetikul lie sense the seeson is dreffle backed up This way

ewers as ushul

HOSEA BIGLOW.

"HERE we stan' on the Constitution, by thunder!

It's a fact o' wich ther's bushils o' proofs;

Fer how could we trample on 't so, I wonder,

Ef't worn't thet it's ollers under our hoofs?"

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;

"Human rights haint no more

Right to come on this floor,

No more 'n the man in the moon," sez he.

"The North haint no kind o' bisness with nothin',

An' you've no idee how much bother it saves;

We aint none riled by their frettin' an' frothin',

We're *used* to layin' the string on our slaves,"

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; —

Sez Mister Foote,

"I should like to shoot

The holl gang, by the gret horn spoon!" sez he.

"Freedom's Keystone is Slavery, thet ther's no doubt on,

It's suttin' thet's — wha' d' ye call it? — divine, —

An' the slaves thet we ollers *make* the most out on

Air them north o' Mason an' Dixon's line,"

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; —

"Fer all that," sez Mangum,

"'T would be better to hang 'em

An' so git red on 'em soon," sez he.

"The mass ough' to labor an' we lay on soffies,

Thet's the reason I want to spread Freedom's aree;

It puts all the cunninest on us in office, An' reelises our Maker's orig'nal idee,"

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; —

"Thet's ez plain," sez Cass,

"Ez thet some one's an ass,

It's ez clear ez the sun is at noon," sez he.

"Now don't go to say I'm the friend of oppression,

But keep all your spare breath fer coolin' your broth,

Fer I ollers hev strove (at least thet's my impression)

To make cussed free with the rights o' the North,"

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; —

"Yes," sez Davis o' Miss.,

"The perfection o' bliss

Is in skinnin' thet same old coon," sez he.

"Slavery's a thing thet depends on complexion,

It's God's law thet fetters on black skins don't chafe;

Ef brains wuz to settle it (horrid reflection! Wich of our onnable body'd be safe?"



Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; —  
 Sez Mister Hannegan,  
 Afore he began agin,  
 "Thet exception is quite oppertoon,"  
 sez he.

"Gen'le Cass, Sir, you need n't be twitchin'  
 your collar,  
*Your merit's quite clear by the dut on*  
*your knees,*  
 At the North we don't make no distinctions  
 o' color;  
 You can all take a lick at our shoes wen  
 you please,"  
 Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; —  
 Sez Mister Jarnagin,  
 "They wun't hev to larn agin,  
 They all on 'em know the old toon,"  
 sez he.

"The slavery question aint no ways bewilderin',  
 North an' South hev one int'rest, it's plain  
 to a glance;  
 No'thern men, like us patriarchs, don't sell  
 their childrin,  
 But they *du* sell themselves, ef they git a  
 good chance,"  
 Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; —  
 Sez Atherton here,  
 "This is gittin' severe,  
 I wish I could dive like a loon," sez he.

"It 'll break up the Union, this talk about  
 freedom,  
 An' your fact'ry gals (soon ez we split)  
 'll make head,  
 An' gittin' some Miss chief or other to lead  
 'em,  
 'Il go to work raisin' permiscoous Ned,"  
 Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; —  
 "Yes, the North," sez Colquitt,  
 "Ef we Southerners all quit,  
 Would go down like a busted balloon,"  
 sez he.

"Jest look wut is doin', wut annyky's  
 brewin'  
 In the beautiful clime o' the olive an'  
 vine,  
 All the wise aristoxty's atumblin' to ruin,  
 An' the sankylots drorin' an' drinkin'  
 their wine,"  
 Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; —  
 "Yes," sez Johnson, "in France

They're beginnin' to dance  
 Beëlzebub's own rigadood," sez he.

"The South's safe enough, it don't feel a  
 mite skeery,  
 Our slaves in their darkness an' dut air  
 tu blest  
 Not to welcome with proud hallylугers the  
 ery  
 Wen our eagle kicks yourn from the nay-  
 tional nest,"  
 Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; —  
 "Oh," sez Westcott o' Florida,  
 "Wut treason is horridier  
 Than our priv'leges tryin' to proon?"  
 sez he.

"It's 'coz they're so happy, thet, wen crazy  
 sarpints  
 Stick their nose in our bizness, we git so  
 darned riled;  
 We think it's our dooty to give pooty sharp  
 hints,  
 Thet the last crumb of Edin on airth  
 sha'n't be spiled,"  
 Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he; —  
 "Ah," sez Dixon H. Lewis,  
 "It perfectly true is  
 Thet slavery's airth's grettest boon,"  
 sez he.

[It was said of old time, that riches have wings; and, though this be not applicable in a literal strictness to the wealth of our patriarchal brethren of the South, yet it is clear that their possessions have legs, and an unaccountable propensity for using them in a northerly direction. I marvel that the grand jury of Washington did not find a true bill against the North Star for aiding and abetting Drayton and Sayres. It would have been quite of a piece with the intelligence displayed by the South on other questions connected with slavery. I think that no ship of state was ever freighted with a more veritable Jonah than this same domestic institution of ours. Mephistopheles himself could not feign so bitterly, so satirically sad a sight as this of three millions of human beings crushed beyond help or hope by this one mighty argument, — *Our fathers knew no better!* Nevertheless, it is the unavoidable destiny of Jonahs to be cast overboard sooner or later. Or shall we try the experiment of hiding our Jonah in a safe place, that none may lay hands on him to make jetsam of him? Let us, then, with equal forethought and wisdom, lash ourselves to the anchor, and await, in pious confidence, the certain result. Perhaps our suspicious passenger is no Jonah after all, being black. For it is well known that a superintending Providence made

a kind of sandwich of Ham and his descendants, to be devoured by the Caucasian race.

In God's name, let all, who hear nearer and nearer the hungry moan of the storm and the growl of the breakers, speak out! But, alas! we have no right to interfere. If a man pluck an apple of mine, he shall be in danger of the justice; but if he steal my brother, I must be silent. Who says this? Our Constitution, consecrated by the callous consuetude of sixty years, and grasped in triumphant argument by the left hand of him whose right hand clutches the clotted slave-whip. Justice, venerable with the undethronable majesty of countless æons, says,—SPEAK! The Past, wise with the sorrows and desolations of ages, from amid her shattered fanes and wolf-housing palaces, echoes,—SPEAK! Nature, through her thousand trumpets of freedom, her stars, her sunrises, her seas, her winds, her cataracts, her mountains blue with cloudy pines, blows jubilant encouragement, and cries,—SPEAK! From the soul's trembling abysses the still, small voice not vaguely murmurs,—SPEAK! But, alas! the Constitution and the Honorable Mr. Bagowind, M. C., say—BE DUMB!

It occurs to me to suggest, as a topic of inquiry in this connection, whether, on that momentous occasion when the goats and the sheep shall be parted, the Constitution and the Honorable Mr. Bagowind, M. C., will be expected to take their places on the left as our hircine vicars,

*Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?  
Quem patronum rogaturus?*

There is a point where toleration sinks into sheer baseness and poltroonery. The toleration of the worst leads us to look on what is barely better as good enough, and to worship what is only moderately good. Woe to that man, or that nation, to whom mediocrity has become an ideal!

Has our experiment of self-government succeeded, if it barely manage to *rub and go*? Here, now, is a piece of barbarism which Christ and the nineteenth century say shall cease, and which Messrs. Smith, Brown, and others say shall *not* cease. I would by no means deny the eminent respectability of these gentlemen, but I confess, that, in such a wrestling-match, I cannot help having my fears for them.

*Discite justitiam, moniti, et non temnere divos.*

H. W.]

NO. VI

## THE PIOUS EDITOR'S CREED

[AT the special instance of Mr. Biglow, I preface the following satire with an extract from a sermon preached during the past summer, from Ezekiel xxxiv. 2: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel." Since the Sabbath on which this discourse was delivered,

the editor of the "Jaalam Independent Blunderbuss" has unaccountably absented himself from our house of worship.

"I know of no so responsible position as that of the public journalist. The editor of our day bears the same relation to his time that the clerk bore to the age before the invention of printing. Indeed, the position which he holds is that which the clergyman should hold even now. But the clergyman chooses to walk off to the extreme edge of the world, and to throw such seed as he has clear over into that darkness which he calls the Next Life. As if *next* did not mean *nearest*, and as if any life were nearer than that immediately present one which boils and eddies all around him at the caucuses, the ratification meeting, and the polls! Who taught him to exhort men to prepare for eternity, as for some future era of which the present forms no integral part? The furrow which Time is even now turning runs through the Everlasting, and in that must he plant, or nowhere. Yet he would fain believe and teach that we are *going* to have more of eternity than we have now. This *going* of his is like that of the auctioneer, on which *gone* follows before we have made up our minds to bid,—in which manner, not three months back, I lost an excellent copy of Chappelow on Job. So it has come to pass that the preacher, instead of being a living force, has faded into an emblematic figure at christenings, weddings, and funerals. Or, if he exercise any other function, it is as keeper and feeder of certain theologic dogmas, which, when occasion offers, he unkennels with a *staboy!* 'to bark and bite as 'tis their nature to,' whence that reproach of *odium theologicum* has arisen.

"Meanwhile, see what a pulpit the editor mounts daily, sometimes with a congregation of fifty thousand within reach of his voice, and never so much as a nodder, even, among them! And from what a Bible can he choose his text,—a Bible which needs no translation, and which no priestcraft can shut and clasp from the laity,—the open volume of the world, upon which, with a pen of sunshine or destroying fire, the inspired Present is even now writing the annals of God! Methinks the editor who should understand his calling, and be equal thereto, would truly deserve that title of ποιμήν λαόν, which Homer bestows upon princes. He would be the Moses of our nineteenth century; and whereas the old Sinai, silent now, is but a common mountain stared at by the elegant tourist and crawled over by the hammering geologist, he must find his tables of the new law here among factories and cities in this Wilderness of Sin (Numbers xxxiii. 12) called Progress of Civilization, and be the captain of our Exodus into the Canaan of a truer social order.

"Nevertheless, our editor will not come so far within even the shadow of Sinai as Mahomet did, but chooses rather to construe Moses by Joe Smith. He takes up the crook, not that the sheep may be fed, but that he may never want a warm woollen suit and a joint of mutton.

*Immemor, O, fidei, pecorumque oblite tuorum !*

For which reason I would derive the name *editor* not so much from *edo*, to publish, as from *edo*, to eat, that being the peculiar profession to which he esteems himself called. He blows up the flames of political discord for no other occasion than that he may thereby handily boil his own pot. I believe there are two thousand of these mutton-loving shepherds in the United States, and of these, how many have even the dimmest perception of their immense power, and the duties consequent thereon? Here and there, haply, one. Nine hundred and ninety-nine labor to impress upon the people the great principles of *Tweedledum*, and other nine hundred and ninety-nine preach with equal earnestness the gospel according to *Tweedledee*."—H. W.]

I DU believe in Freedom's cause,  
Ez fur away ez Payris is ;  
I love to see her stick her claws  
In them infarnal Phayrisees ;  
It's wal enough agin a king  
To dror resolves an' triggiers,—  
But libbaty's a kind o' thing  
Thet don't agree with niggers.

I du believe the people want  
A tax on teas an' coffees,  
Thet nothin' aint extravygunt, —  
Purvidin' I'm in office ;  
Fer I hev loved my country sence  
My eye-teeth filled their sockets,  
An' Uncle Sam I reverence,  
Partic'larly his pockets.

I du believe in *any* plan  
O' levyin' the texes,  
Ez long ez, like a lumberman,  
I git jest wut I axes ;  
I go free-trade thru thick an' thin,  
Because it kind o' rouses  
The folks to vote, — an' keeps us in  
Our quiet custom-houses.

I du believe it's wise an' good  
To sen' out furrin missions,  
Thet is, on sartin understood  
An' orthydox conditions ; —  
I mean nine thousan' dolls. per ann.,  
Nine thousan' more fer outfit,  
An' me to recommend a man  
The place 'ould jest about fit.

I du believe in special ways  
O' prayin' an' convartin' ;  
The bread comes back in many days,

An' buttered, tu, fer sartin ;  
I mean in preyin' till one busts  
On wut the party chooses,  
An' in convartin' public trusts  
To very privit uses.

I du believe hard coin the stuff  
Fer 'lectioneers to spout on ;  
The people's ollers soft enough  
To make hard money out on ;  
Dear Uncle Sam pervides fer his,  
An' gives a good-sized junk to all, —  
I don't care *how* hard money is,  
Ez long ez mine's paid punctooal.

I du believe with all my soul  
In the gret Press's freedom,  
To pint the people to the goal  
An' in the traces lead 'em ;  
Palsied the arm thet forges yokes  
At my fat contracts squintin',  
An' withered be the nose thet pokes  
Inter the gov'ment printin' !

I du believe thet I should give  
Wut's his'n unto Cæsar,  
Fer it's by him I move an' live,  
Frum him my bread an' cheese air ;  
I du believe thet all o' me  
Doth bear his superscription, —  
Will, conscience, honor, honesty,  
An' things o' thet description.

I du believe in prayer an' praise  
To him thet hez the grantin'  
O' jobs, — in every thin' thet pays,  
But most of all in CANTIN' ;  
This doth my cup with marcies fill,  
This lays all thought o' sin to rest, —  
I *don't* believe in princerples,  
But oh, I *du* in interest.

I du believe in bein' this  
Or thet, ez it may happen  
One way or 't other hendiest is  
To ketch the people nappin' ;  
It aint by princerples nor men  
My preudent course is steadied, —  
I scent wich pays the best, an' then  
Go into it baldheaded.

I du believe thet holdin' slaves  
Comes nat'ral to a President,  
Let 'lone the rowdedow it saves  
To hev a wal-broke precedunt ;

Fer any office, small or gret,  
 I could n't ax with no face,  
 'thout I'd ben, thru dry an' wet,  
 Th' unrizzest kind o' doughface.

I du believe wutever trash  
 'll keep the people in blindness,—  
 Thet we the Mexicuns can thrash  
 Right inter brotherly kindness,  
 Thet bombshells, grape, an' powder 'n' ball  
 Air good-will's strongest magnets,  
 Thet peace, to make it stick at all,  
 Must be druv in with bagnets.

In short, I firmly du believe  
 In Humbug generally,  
 Fer it's a thing thet I perceive  
 To hev a solid vally;  
 This heth my faithful shepherd ben,  
 In pasturs sweet heth led me,  
 An' this 'll keep the people green  
 To feed ez they hev fed me.

[I subjoin here another passage from my before-mentioned discourse.

"Wonderful, to him that has eyes to see it rightly, is the newspaper. To me, for example, sitting on the critical front bench of the pit, in my study here in Jaalam, the advent of my weekly journal is as that of a strolling theatre, or rather of a puppet-show, on whose stage, narrow as it is, the tragedy, comedy, and farce of life are played in little. Behold the whole huge earth sent to me hebdomadally in a brown-paper wrapper!

"Hither, to my obscure corner, by wind or steam, on horseback or dromedary-back, in the pouch of the Indian runner, or clicking over the magnetic wires, troop all the famous performers from the four quarters of the globe. Looked at from a point of criticism, tiny puppets they seem all, as the editor sets up his booth upon my desk and officiates as showman. Now I can truly see how little and transitory is life. The earth appears almost as a drop of vinegar, on which the solar microscope of the imagination must be brought to bear in order to make out anything distinctly. That animalcule there, in the pea-jacket, is Louis Philippe, just landed on the coast of England. That other, in the gray surtout and cocked hat, is Napoleon Bonaparte Smith, assuring France that she need apprehend no interference from him in the present alarming juncture. At that spot, where you seem to see a speck of something in motion, is an immense mass-meeting. Look sharper, and you will see a mite brandishing his mandibles in an excited manner. That is the great Mr. Soandso, defining his position amid tumultuous and irrepressible cheers. That infinitesimal creature, upon whom some

score of others, as minute as he, are gazing in open-mouthed admiration, is a famous philosopher, expounding to a select audience their capacity for the Infinite. That scarce discernible pufflet of smoke and dust is a revolution. That speck there is a reformer, just arranging the lever with which he is to move the world. And lo, there creeps forward the shadow of a skeleton that blows one breath between its grinning teeth, and all our distinguished actors are whisked off the slippery stage into the dark Beyond.

"Yes, the little show-box has its solemnner suggestions. Now and then we catch a glimpse of a grim old man, who lays down a scythe and hour-glass in the corner while he shifts the scenes. There, too, in the dim background, a weird shape is ever delving. Sometimes he leans upon his mattock, and gazes, as a coach whirls by, bearing the newly married on their wedding jaunt, or glances carelessly at a babe brought home from christening. Suddenly (for the scene grows larger and larger as we look) a bony hand snatches back a performer in the midst of his part, and him, whom yesterday two infinities (past and future) would not suffice, a handful of dust is enough to cover and silence forever. Nay, we see the same fleshless fingers opening to clutch the showman himself, and guess, not without a shudder, that they are lying in wait for spectator also.

"Think of it: for three dollars a year I buy a season-ticket to this great Globe Theatre, for which God would write the dramas (only that we like farces, spectacles, and the tragedies of Apollyon better), whose scene-shifter is Time, and whose curtain is rung down by Death.

"Such thoughts will occur to me sometimes as I am tearing off the wrapper of my newspaper. Then suddenly that otherwise too often vacant sheet becomes invested for me with a strange kind of awe. Look! deaths and marriages, notices of inventions, discoveries, and books, lists of promotions, of killed, wounded, and missing, news of fires, accidents, of sudden wealth and as sudden poverty;—I hold in my hand the ends of myriad invisible electric conductors, along which tremble the joys, sorrows, wrongs, triumphs, hopes, and despairs of as many men and women everywhere. So that upon that mood of mind which seems to isolate me from mankind as a spectator of their puppet-pranks, another supervenes, in which I feel that I, too, unknown and unheard of, am yet of some import to my fellows. For, through my newspaper here, do not families take pains to send me, an entire stranger, news of a death among them? Are not here two who would have me know of their marriage? And, strangest of all, is not this singular person anxious to have me informed that he has received a fresh supply of Dimitry Bruisgins? But to none of us does the Present continue miraculous (even if for a moment discerned as such). We glance carelessly at the sunrise, and get used to Orion and the Pleiades. The wonder wears off, and to-morrow this sheet, (Acts x. 11, 12), in which a vision was



let down to me from Heaven, shall be the wrappage to a bar of soap or the platter for a beggar's broken victuals." — H. W.]

## No. VII

## A LETTER

FROM A CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY IN ANSWER TO SUTTIN QUESTIONS PROPOSED BY MR. HOSEA BIGLOW, INCLOSED IN A NOTE FROM MR. BIGLOW TO S. H. GAY, ESQ., EDITOR OF THE NATIONAL ANTI-SLAVERY STANDARD

[CURIOSITY may be said to be the quality which preëminently distinguishes and segregates man from the lower animals. As we trace the scale of animated nature downward, we find this faculty (as it may truly be called) of the mind diminished in the savage, and wellnigh extinct in the brute. The first object which civilized man proposes to himself I take to be the finding out whatsoever he can concerning his neighbors. *Nihil humanum a me alienum puto*; I am curious about even John Smith. The desire next in strength to this (an opposite pole, indeed, of the same magnet) is that of communicating the unintelligence we have carefully picked up.

Men in general may be divided into the inquisitive and the communicative. To the first class belong Peeping Toms, eaves-droppers, navel-contemplating Brahmins, metaphysicians, travellers, Empedocleses, spies, the various societies for promoting Rhinotism, Columbuses, Yankees, discoverers, and men of science, who present themselves to the mind as so many marks of interrogation wandering up and down the world, or sitting in studies and laboratories. The second class I should again subdivide into four. In the first subdivision I would rank those who have an itch to tell us about themselves, — as keepers of diaries, insignificant persons generally, Montaignes, Horace Walpoles, autobiographers, poets. The second includes those who are anxious to impart information concerning other people, — as historians, barbers, and such. To the third belong those who labor to give us intelligence about nothing at all, — as novelists, political orators, the large majority of authors, preachers, lecturers, and the like. In the fourth come those who are communicative from motives of public benevolence, — as finders of mares'-nests and bringers of ill news. Each of us two-legged fowls without feathers embraces all these subdivisions in himself to a greater or less degree, for none of us so much as lays an egg, or incubates a chalk one, but straightway the whole barnyard shall know it by our cackle or our cluck. *Omnibus hoc vitium est*. There are different grades in all

these classes. One will turn his telescope toward a back-yard, another toward Uranus; one will tell you that he dined with Smith, another that he supped with Plato. In one particular, all men may be considered as belonging to the first grand division, inasmuch as they all seem equally desirous of discovering the mote in their neighbor's eye.

To one or another of these species every human being may safely be referred. I think it beyond a peradventure that Jonah prosecuted some inquiries into the digestive apparatus of whales, and that Noah sealed up a letter in an empty bottle, that news in regard to him might not be wanting in case of the worst. They had else been super or subter human. I conceive, also, that, as there are certain persons who continually peep and pry at the keyhole of that mysterious door through which, sooner or later, we all make our exits, so there are doubtless ghosts fidgeting and fretting on the other side of it, because they have no means of conveying back to this world the scraps of news they have picked up in that. For there is an answer ready somewhere to every question, the great law of *give and take* runs though all nature, and if we see a hook, we may be sure that an eye is waiting for it. I read in every face I meet a standing advertisement of information wanted in regard to A. B., or that the friends of C. D. can hear something to his disadvantage by application to such a one.

It was to gratify the two great passions of asking and answering that epistolary correspondence was first invented. Letters (for by this usurped title epistles are now commonly known) are of several kinds. First, there are those which are not letters at all — as letters-patent, letters dismissory, letters enclosing bills, letters of administration, Pliny's letters, letters of diplomacy, of Cato, of Mentor, of Lords Lyttelton, Chesterfield, and Orrery, of Jacob Behmen, Seneca (whom St. Jerome includes in his list of sacred writers), letters from abroad, from sons in college to their fathers, letters of marque, and letters generally, which are in no wise letters of mark. Second, are real letters, such as those of Gray, Cowper, Walpole, Howell, Lamb, D. Y., the first letters from children (printed in staggering capitals), Letters from New York, letters of credit, and others, interesting for the sake of the writer or the thing written. I have read also letters from Europe by a gentleman named Pinto, containing some curious gossip, and which I hope to see collected for the benefit of the curious. There are, besides, letters addressed to posterity, — as epitaphs, for example, written for their own monuments by monarchs, whereby we have lately become possessed of the names of several great conquerors and kings of kings, hitherto unheard of and still unpronounceable, but valuable to the student of the entirely dark ages. The letter of our Saviour to King Abgarus, that which St. Peter sent to King Pepin in the year of grace 755, that of the Virgin to the magistrates of Messina, that of the Sanhedrim of Toledo to Annas and Caiaphas, A. D. 35,

that of Galeazzo Sforza's spirit to his brother Lodovico, that of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus to the D——I, and that of this last-mentioned active police-magistrate to a nun of Girgenti, I would place in a class by themselves, as also the letters of candidates, concerning which I shall dilate more fully in a note at the end of the following poem. At present *sat prata biberunt*. Only, concerning the shape of letters, they are all either square or oblong, to which general figures circular letters and round-robins also conform themselves. — H. W.]

DEER SIR its gut to be the fashun now to rite letters to the candid 8s and i wus chose at a publick Meetin in Jaalam to du wut wus nessary fur that town. i writ to 271 ginerals and gut ansers to 209. tha air called candid 8s but I don't see nothin candid about 'em. this here 1 wich I send wus thought satty's factory. I dunno as it's ushle to print Poscrips, but as all the ansers I got hed the saim, I sposed it wus best. times has gretly changed. Formaly to knock a man into a cocked hat wus to use him up, but now it ony gives him a chance fur the cheef madgustracy. — H. B.

DEAR SIR, — You wish to know my notions  
On sartin pints thet rile the land ;  
There 's nothin' thet my natur so shuns  
Ez bein' mum or underhand ;  
I 'm a straight-spoken kind o' creetur  
Thet blurts right out wut 's in his head,  
An' ef I 've one pecooler feetur,  
It is a nose thet wunt be led.

So, to begin at the beginnin'  
An' come direcly to the pint,  
I think the country's underpinnin'  
Is some consid'ble out o' jint ;  
I aint agoin' to try your patience  
By tellin' who done this or thet,  
I don't make no insinooations,  
I jest let on I smell a rat.

Thet is, I mean, it seems to me so,  
But, ef the public think I 'm wrong,  
I wunt deny but wut I be so, —  
An', fact, it don't smell very strong ;  
My mind 's tu fair to lose its balance  
An' say wich party hez most sense ;  
There may be folks o' greater talence  
Thet can't set stiddier on the fence.

I 'm an eclectic ; ez to choosin'  
'Twixt this an' thet, I 'm plaguy lawth ;

I leave a side thet looks like losin',  
But (wile there 's doubt) I stick to both ;  
I stan' upon the Constitution,  
Ez preudent statesmun say, who've  
planned  
A way to git the most profusion  
O' chances ez to *ware* they 'll stand.

Ez fer the war, I go agin it, —  
I mean to say I kind o' du, —  
Thet is, I mean thet, bein' in it,  
The best way wuz to fight it thru ;  
Not but wut abstract war is horrid,  
I sign to thet with all my heart, —  
But civlyzation *doos* git forrid  
Sometimes upon a powder-cart.

About thet darned Proviso matter  
I never hed a grain o' doubt,  
Nor I aint one my sense to scatter  
So 'st no one could n't pick it out ;  
My love fer North an' South is equil,  
So I 'll jest answer plump an' frank,  
No matter wut may be the sequil, —  
Yes, Sir, I *am* agin a Bank.

Ez to the answerin' o' questions,  
I 'm an off ox at bein' druv,  
Though I aint one thet ary test shuns  
'Ill give our folks a helpin' shove ;  
Kind o' permisceous I go it  
Fer the holl country, an' the ground  
I take, ez nigh ez I can show it,  
Is pooty gen'ally all round.

I don't appruve o' givin' pledges ;  
You 'd ough' to leave a feller free,  
An' not go knockin' out the wedges  
To ketch his fingers in the tree ;  
Pledges air awfle breachy cattle  
Thet preudent farmers don't turn out, —  
Ez long 'z the people git their rattle,  
Wut is there fer 'm to grout about ?

Ez to the slaves, there 's no confusion  
In *my* idees consarnin' them, —  
I think they air an Institution,  
A sort of — yes, jest so, — ahem :  
Do I own any ? Of my merit  
On thet pint you yourself may jedge ;  
All is, I never drink no sperit,  
Nor I haint never signed no pledge.

Ez to my princerples, I glory  
In hev'in' nothin' o' the sort ;

I aint a Wig, I aint a Tory,  
 I 'm jest a canderate, in short;  
 That 's fair an' square an' parpencieler  
 But, ef the Public cares a fig  
 To hev me an' thin' in partier,er,  
 Wy, I 'm a kind o' peri-Wig.

P. S.

Ez we 're a sort o' privateerin',  
 O' course, you know, it 's sheer an' sheer,  
 An' there is sutthin' wuth your hearin'  
 I 'll mention in *your* privit ear;  
 Ef you git *me* inside the White House,  
 Your head with ile I 'll kin' o' 'nint  
 By gittin' *you* inside the Light-house  
 Down to the eend o' Jaalam Pint.

An' ez the North hez took to brustlin'  
 At bein' scrouged frum off the roost,  
 I 'll tell ye wut 'll save all tusslin'  
 An' give our side a harnsome boost, —  
 Tell 'em thot on the Slavery question  
 I 'm RIGHT, although to speak I 'm  
 lawth;  
 This gives you a safe pint to rest on,  
 An' leaves me frontin' South by North.

[And now of epistles candidatal, which are of two kinds, — namely, letters of acceptance, and letters definitive of position. Our republic, on the eve of an election, may safely enough be called a republic of letters. Epistolary composition becomes then an epidemic, which seizes one candidate after another, not seldom cutting short the thread of political life. It has come to such a pass, that a party dreads less the attacks of its opponents than a letter from its candidate. *Litera scripta manet*, and it will go hard if something bad cannot be made of it. General Harrison, it is well understood, was surrounded, during his candidacy, with the *cordon sanitaire* of a vigilance committee. No prisoner in Spielberg was ever more cautiously deprived of writing materials. The soot was scraped carefully from the chimney-places; outposts of expert rifle-shooters rendered it sure death for any goose (who came clad in feathers) to approach within a certain limited distance of North Bend; and all domestic fowls about the premises were reduced to the condition of Plato's original man. By these precautions the General was saved. *Parva componere magnis*, I remember, that, when party-spirit once ran high among my people, upon occasion of the choice of a new deacon, I, having my preferences, yet not caring too openly to express them, made use of an innocent fraud to bring about that result which I deemed most desirable. My stratagem was no other than the throwing a copy of the Complete Letter-Writer in the way

of the candidate whom I wished to defeat. He caught the infection, and addressed a short note to his constituents, in which the opposite party detected so many and so grave improprieties (he had modelled it upon the letter of a young lady accepting a proposal of marriage), that he not only lost his election, but, falling under a suspicion of Sabellianism and I know not what (the widow Endive assured me that he was a Paralipomenon, to her certain knowledge), was forced to leave the town. Thus it is that the letter killeth.

The object which candidates propose to themselves in writing is to convey no meaning at all. And here is a quite unsuspected pitfall into which they successively plunge headlong. For it is precisely in such cryptographies that mankind are prone to seek for and find a wonderful amount and variety of significance. *Omne ignotum pro mirifico*. How do we admire at the antique world striving to crack those oracular nuts from Delphi, Hammon, and elsewhere, in only one of which can I so much as surmise that any kernel had ever lodged; that, namely, wherein Apollo confessed that he was mortal. One Didymus is, moreover, related to have written six thousand books on the single subject of grammar, a topic rendered only more tenebritic by the labors of his successors, and which seems still to possess an attraction for authors in proportion as they can make nothing of it. A singular loadstone for theologians, also, is the Beast in the Apocalypse, whereof, in the course of my studies, I have noted two hundred and three several interpretations, each lethiferal to all the rest. *Non nostrum est tantas componere lites*, yet I have myself ventured upon a two hundred and fourth, which I embodied in a discourse preached on occasion of the demise of the late usurper, Napoleon Bonaparte, and which quieted, in a large measure, the minds of my people. It is true that my views on this important point were ardently controverted by Mr. Shearjashub Holden, the then preceptor of our academy, and in other particulars a very deserving and sensible young man, though possessing a somewhat limited knowledge of the Greek tongue. But his heresy struck down no deep root, and, he having been lately removed by the hand of Providence, I had the satisfaction of reaffirming my cherished sentiments in a sermon preached upon the Lord's day immediately succeeding his funeral. This might seem like taking an unfair advantage, did I not add that he had made provision in his last will (being celibate) for the publication of a posthumous tractate in support of his own dangerous opinions.

I know of nothing in our modern times which approaches so nearly to the ancient oracle as the letter of a Presidential candidate. Now, among the Greeks, the eating of beans was strictly forbidden to all such as had it in mind to consult those expert amphibologists, and this same prohibition on the part of Pythagoras to his disciples is understood to imply an abstinence from politics, beans having been used as



ballots. That other explication, *quod videlicet sensus eo cibo obtundi existimaret*, though supported *pugnis et calcibus* by many of the learned, and not wanting the countenance of Cicero, is confuted by the larger experience of New England. On the whole, I think it safer to apply here the rule of interpretation which now generally obtains in regard to antique cosmogonies, myths, fables, proverbial expressions, and knotty points generally, which is, to find a common-sense meaning, and then select whatever can be imagined the most opposite thereto. In this way we arrive at the conclusion, that the Greeks objected to the questioning of candidates. And very properly, if, as I conceive, the chief point be not to discover what a person in that position is, or what he will do, but whether he can be elected. *Vos exemplaria Græca nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.*

But, since an imitation of the Greeks in this particular (the asking of questions being one chief privilege of freemen) is hardly to be hoped for, and our candidates will answer, whether they are questioned or not, I would recommend that these ante-electionary dialogues should be carried on by symbols, as were the diplomatic correspondences of the Scythians and Macrobian, or confined to the language of signs, like the famous interview of Panurge and Goatsnose. A candidate might then convey a suitable reply to all committees of inquiry by closing one eye, or by presenting them with a phial of Egyptian darkness to be speculated upon by their respective constituencies. These answers would be susceptible of whatever retrospective construction the exigencies of the political campaign might seem to demand, and the candidate could take his position on either side of the fence with entire consistency. Or, if letters must be written, profitable use might be made of the Dighton rock hieroglyphic or the cuneiform script, every fresh decipherer of which is enabled to educe a different meaning, whereby a sculptured stone or two supplies us, and will probably continue to supply posterity, with a very vast and various body of authentic history. For even the briefest epistle in the ordinary chirography is dangerous. There is scarce any style so compressed that superfluous words may not be detected in it. A severe critic might curtail that famous brevity of Caesar's by two thirds, drawing his pen through the supererogatory *veni* and *vidi*. Perhaps, after all, the surest footing of hope is to be found in the rapidly increasing tendency to demand less and less of qualification in candidates. Already have statesmanship, experience, and the possession (nay, the profession, even) of principles been rejected as superfluous, and may not the patriot reasonably hope that the ability to write will follow? At present, there may be death in pot-hooks as well as pots, the loop of a letter may suffice for a bow-string, and all the dreadful heresies of Antislavery may lurk in a flourish. — H. W.]

## No. VIII

A SECOND LETTER FROM  
B. SAWIN, ESQ.

[In the following epistle, we behold Mr. Sawin returning, a *miles emeritus*, to the bosom of his family. *Quantum mutatus!* The good Father of us all had doubtless intrusted to the keeping of this child of his certain faculties of a constructive kind. He had put in him a share of that vital force, the nicest economy of every minute atom of which is necessary to the perfect development of Humanity. He had given him a brain and heart, and so had equipped his soul with the two strong wings of knowledge and love, whereby it can mount to hang its nest under the eaves of heaven. And this child, so dowered, he had intrusted to the keeping of his vicar, the State. How stands the account of that stewardship? The State, or Society (call her by what name you will), had taken no manner of thought of him till she saw him swept out into the street, the pitiful leavings of last night's debauch, with cigar-ends, lemon-parings, tobacco-quids, slops, vile stench, and the whole loathsome next-morning of the bar-room, — an own child of the Almighty God! I remember him as he was brought to be christened, a ruddy, rugged babe; and now there he wallows, reeking, seething, — the dead corpse, not of a man, but of a soul, — a putrefying lump, horrible for the life that is in it. Comes the wind of heaven, that good Samaritan, and parts the hair upon his forehead, nor is too nice to kiss those parched, cracked lips; the morning opens upon him her eyes full of pitying sunshine, the sky yearns down to him, — and there he lies fermenting. O sleep! let me not profane thy holy name by calling that stertorous unconsciousness a slumber! By and by comes along the State, God's vicar. Does she say, "My poor, forlorn foster-child! Behold here a force which I will make dig and plant and build for me"? Not so, but, "Here is a recruit ready-made to my hand, a piece of destroying energy lying unprofitably idle." So she claps an ugly gray suit on him, puts a musket in his grasp, and sends him off, with Gubernatorial and other godspeeds, to do duty as a destroyer.

I made one of the crowd at the last Mechanics' Fair, and, with the rest, stood gazing in wonder at a perfect machine, with its soul of fire, its boiler-heart that sent the hot blood pulsing along the iron arteries, and its thews of steel. And while I was admiring the adaptation of means to end, the harmonious involutions of contrivance, and the never-bewildered complexity, I saw a grimed and greasy fellow, the imperious engine's lackey and drudge, whose sole office was to let fall, at intervals, a drop or two of oil upon a certain joint. Then my soul said within me, See there a piece of mechanism to which that other you marvel at is but as the rude first effort of a child, — a force



which not merely suffices to set a few wheels in motion, but which can send an impulse all through the infinite future, — a contrivance, not for turning out pins, or stitching button-holes, but for making Hamlets and Lears. And yet this thing of iron shall be housed, waited on, guarded from rust and dust, and it shall be a crime but so much as to scratch it with a pin; while the other, with its fire of God in it, shall be buffeted hither and thither, and finally sent carefully a thousand miles to be the target for a Mexican cannon-ball. Unthrifty Mother State! My heart burned within me for pity and indignation, and I renewed this covenant with my own soul, — *In aliis mansuetus ero, at, in blasphemis contra Christum, non ita.* — H. W.

I SPOSE you wonder ware I be; I can't tell,  
fer the soul o' me,  
Exacly ware I be myself, — meanin' by  
thet the holl o' me.

Wen I left hum, I hed two legs, an' they  
worn't bad ones neither,

(The scaliest trick they ever played wuz  
bringin' on me hither,)

Now one on 'em's I dunno ware; — they  
thought I wuz adyin',

An' sawed it off because they said 't wuz  
kin' o' mortifyin';

I'm willin' to believe it wuz, an' yit I don't  
see, nuther,

Wy one shoud take to feelin' cheap a min-  
nit sooner 'n t' other,

Sence both wuz equilly to blame; but  
things is ez they be;

It took on so they took it off, an' thet's  
enough fer me:

There's one good thing, though, to be said  
about my wooden new one, —

The liquor can't git into it ez 't used to in  
the true one;

So it saves drink; an' then, besides, a feller  
could n't beg

A gretter blessin' then to hev one ollers  
sober peg;

It's true a chap's in want o' two fer fol-  
lerin' a drum,

But all the march I'm up to now is jest to  
Kingdom Come.

I've lost one eye, but thet's a loss it's easy  
to supply

Out o' the glory thet I've gut, fer thet is  
all my eye;

An' one is big enough, I guess, by dili-  
gently usin' it,

To see all I shall ever git by way o' pay fer  
losin' it;

Off'cers I notice, who git paid fer all our  
thumps an' kickins,

Du wal by keepin' single eyes arter the  
fattest pickins;

So, ez the eye's put fairly out, I'll larn to  
go without it,

An' not allow *myself* to be no gret put out  
about it.

Now, le' me see, thet is n't all; I used, 'fore  
leavin' Jaalam,

To count things on my finger-eends, but  
suthin' seems to ail 'em:

Ware's my left hand? Oh, darn it, yes,  
I recollect wut's come on 't;

I haint no left arm but my right, an' thet's  
gut jest a thumb on 't;

It aint so hendy ez it wuz to cal'late a sum  
on 't.

I've hed some ribs broke, — six (I b'lieve),  
— I haint kep' no account on 'em;

Wen pensions git to be the talk, I'll settle  
the amount on 'em.

An' now I'm speakin' about ribs, it kin' o'  
brings to mind

One thet I could n't never break, — the one  
I lef' behind;

Ef you should see her, jest clear out the  
spout o' your invention

An' pour the longest sweetnin' in about an  
annooal pension,

An' kin' o' hint (in case, you know, the  
critter should refuse to be

Consoled) I aint so 'xpensive now to keep  
ez wut I used to be;

There's one arm less, ditto one eye, an'  
then the leg thet's wooden

Can be took off an' sot away wenever  
ther's a puddin'.

I spose you think I'm comin' back ez op-  
perlunt ez thunder,

With shiploads o' gold images an' varus  
sorts o' plunder;

Wal, 'fore I vullinteed, I thought this  
country wuz a sort o'

Canaan, a reg'lar Promised Land flowin'  
with rum an' water,

Ware propaty growed up like time, without  
no cultivation,

An' gold wuz dug ez taters be among our  
Yankee nation,

Ware nateral advantages were puffiely  
amazin',

Ware every rock there wuz about with pre-  
cious stuns wuz blazin',

Ware mill-sites filled the country up ez  
 thick ez you could cram 'em,  
 An' desput rivers run about a beggin' folks  
 to dam 'em;  
 Then there were meetin'houses, tu, chockful  
 o' gold an' silver  
 Thet you could take, an' no one could n't  
 hand ye in no bill fer;—  
 Thet's wut I thought afore I went, thet's  
 wut them fellers told us  
 Thet stayed to hum an' speechified an' to  
 the buzzards sold us;  
 I thought thet gold-mines could be gut  
 cheaper than Chiny asters,  
 An' see myself acomin' back like sixty Ja-  
 cob Astors;  
 But sech idees soon melted down an' did n't  
 leave a grease-spot;  
 I vow my holl sheer o' the spiles would n't  
 come nigh a V spot;  
 Although, most anywares we've ben, you  
 need n't break no locks,  
 Nor run no kin' o' risks, to fill your pocket  
 full o' rocks.  
 I 'xpect I mentioned in my last some o' the  
 natral feeturs  
 O' this all-fiered buggy hole in th' way o'  
 awfle creeturs,  
 But I fergut to name (new things to speak  
 on so abounded)  
 How one day you'll most die o' thust, an'  
 'fore the next git drowned.  
 The clymit seems to me jest like a teapot  
 made o' pewter  
 Our Preudence hed, thet would n't pour  
 (all she could du) to suit her;  
 Fust place the leaves 'ould choke the  
 spout, so's not a drop 'ould dreen  
 out,  
 Then Prude 'ould tip an' tip an' tip, till the  
 holl kit bust clean out,  
 The kiver-hinge-pin bein' lost, tea-leaves  
 an' tea an' kiver  
 'ould all come down *kerswosh*! ez though  
 the dam bust in a river.  
 Jest so 't is here; holl months there aint a  
 day o' rainy weather,  
 An' jest ez th' officers 'ould be a layin'  
 heads together  
 Ez t' how they'd mix their drink at sech a  
 milingitary deepot,—  
 'T would pour ez though the lid wuz off the  
 everlastin' teapot.  
 The consequence is, thet I shall take, wen  
 I'm allowed to leave here,

One piece o' propaty along, an' thet's the  
 shakin' fever;  
 It's reggilar employment, though, an' thet  
 aint thought to harm one,  
 Nor 't aint so tiresome ez it wuz with  
 t'other leg an' arm on;  
 An' it's a consolation, tu, although it doos  
 n't pay,  
 To hev it said you're some gret shakes in  
 any kin' o' way.  
 'T worn't very long, I tell ye wut, I thought  
 o' fortin-makin',—  
 One day a reg'lar shiver-de-freeze, an' next  
 ez good ez bakin',—  
 One day abrin' in the sand, then smoth'rin'  
 in the mashes,—  
 Git up all sound, be put to bed a mess o'  
 hacks an' smashes.  
 But then, thinks I, at any rate there's glory  
 to be hed,—  
 Thet's an investment, arter all, thet may n't  
 turn out so bad;  
 But somehow, wen we'd fit an' licked, I  
 ollers found the thanks  
 Gut kin' o' lodged afore they come ez low  
 down ez the ranks;  
 The Gin'rails gut the biggest sheer, the  
 Cunnles next, an' so on,—  
 We never gut a blasted mite o' glory ez I  
 know on;  
 An' spose we hed, I wonder how you're  
 goin' to contrive its  
 Division so's to give a piece to twenty  
 thousand privits;  
 Ef you should multiply by ten the portion  
 o' the brav'st one,  
 You would n't git more 'n half enough to  
 speak of on a grave-stun;  
 We git the licks,—we're jest the grist  
 thet's put into War's hoppers;  
 Leftenants is the lowest grade thet helps  
 pick up the coppers.  
 It may suit folks thet go agin a body with  
 a soul in 't,  
 An' aint contented with a hide without a  
 bagnet hole in 't;  
 But glory is a kin' o' thing I sha' n't pursue  
 no furdur,  
 Coz thet's the offe'ers' parquisite,—yourn's  
 on'y jest the murder.  
 Wal, arter I gin glory up, thinks I at least  
 there's one  
 Thing in the bills we aint hed yit, an' thet's  
 the GLORIOUS FUN;

Ef once we git to Mexico, we fairly may  
persume we  
All day an' night shall revel in the halls o'  
Montezumy.

I'll tell ye wut *my* revels wuz, an' see how  
you would like 'em;

We never gut inside the hall: the highest  
ever *I* come

Wuz stan'in' sentry in the sun (an', fact, it  
*seemed* a cent'ry)

A ketchin' smells o' biled an' roast thet  
come out thru the entry,

An' hearin' ez I sweltered thru my passes  
an' repasses,

A rat-tat-too o' knives an' forks, a clinky-  
clink o' glasses:

I can't tell off the bill o' fare the Gin'ral's  
hed inside;

All I know is, thet out o' doors a pair o'  
soles wuz fried,

An' not a hunder miles away frum ware  
this child wuz posted,

A Massachusetts citizen wuz baked an' biled  
an' roasted;

The on'y thing like revellin' thet ever come  
to me

Wuz bein' routed out o' sleep by thet darned  
revelee.

They say the quarrel 's settled now; fer my  
part I 've some doubt on 't,

't 'll take more fish-skin than folks think to  
take the rile clean out on 't;

At any rate I 'm so used up I can't do no  
more fightin',

The on'y chance thet 's left to me is politics  
or writin';

Now, ez the people's gut to hev a miling-  
tary man,

An' I aint nothin' else jest now, I 've hit  
upon a plan;

The can'idatin' line, you know, 'ould suit  
me to a T,

An' ef I lose, 't wunt hurt my ears to lodge  
another flea;

So I 'll set up ez can'idate fer any kin' o'  
office,

(I mean fer any thet includes good easy-  
cheers an' soffies;

Fer ez tu runnin' fer a place ware work 's  
the time o' day,

You know thet 's wut I never did, — ex-  
cept the other way;)

Ef it 's the Presidential cheer fer wich I 'd  
better run,

Wut two legs anywares about could keep  
up with my one?

There aint no kin' o' quality in can'idates,  
it 's said,

So useful ez a wooden leg, — except a  
wooden head;

There 's nothin' aint so poppylar — (wy,  
it 's a perfect sin

To think wut Mexico hez paid fer Santy  
Anny's pin;) —

Then I haint gut no princerples, an', sence  
I wuz knee-high,

I never *did* hev any gret, ez you can tes-  
tify;

I 'm a decided peace-man, tu, an' go agin  
the war, —

Fer now the holl on 't 's gone an' past, wut  
is there to go *for*?

Ef, wile you 're 'lectioneerin' round, some  
curus chaps should beg

To know my views o' state affairs, jest  
answer WOODEN LEG!

Ef they aint settisfied with thet, an' kin' o'  
pry an' doubt

An' ax fer sutthin' deffynit, jest say ONE  
EYE PUT OUT!

Thet kin' o' talk I guess you 'll find 'll  
answer to a charm,

An' wen you 're druv tu nigh the wall, hol'  
up my missin' arm;

Ef they should nose round fer a pledge, put  
on a vartuous look

An' tell 'em thet 's percisely wut I never  
gin nor — took!

Then you can call me "Timbertoes," —  
thet 's wut the people likes;

Sutthin' combinin' morril truth with  
phrases sech ez strikes;

Some say the people 's fond o' this, or thet,  
or wut you please, —

I tell ye wut the people want is jest correct  
idees;

"Old Timbertoes," you see, 's a creed it 's  
safe to be quite bold on,

There 's nothin' in 't the other side can any  
ways git hold on;

It 's a good tangible idee, a sutthin' to em-  
body

Thet valooable class o' men who look thru  
brandy-toddy;

It gives a Party Platform, tu, jest level  
with the mind

Of all right-thinkin', honest folks thet  
mean to go it blind;

Then there air other good hooraws to dror  
 on ez you need 'em,  
 Sech ez the ONE-EYED SLARTERER, the  
 BLOODY BIRDOFREDUM:  
 Them 's wut takes hold o' folks thet think,  
 ez well ez o' the masses,  
 An' makes you sartin o' the aid o' good  
 men of all classes.

There 's one thing I 'm in doubt about; in  
 order to be Presidunt,  
 It 's absolutely ne'ssary to be a Southern  
 residunt;

The Constitution settles thet, an' also thet  
 a feller

Must own a nigger o' some sort, jet black,  
 or brown, or yellor.

Now I haint no objections agin particklar  
 climes,

Nor agin ownin' anythin' (except the truth  
 sometimes),

But, ez I haint no capital, up there among  
 ye, maybe,

You might raise funds enough fer me to  
 buy a low-priced baby,

An' then to suit the No'thern folks, who  
 feel obleeged to say

They hate an' cus the very thing they vote  
 fer every day,

Say you 're assured I go full but fer Lib-  
 baty's diffusion

An' made the purchis on'y jest to spite the  
 Institootion;—

But, golly! there 's the currier's hoss upon  
 the pavement pawin'!

I 'll be more 'xplicit in my next.

Yourn,

BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN.

[We have now a tolerably fair chance of esti-  
 mating how the balance-sheet stands between  
 our returned volunteer and glory. Supposing  
 the entries to be set down on both sides of the  
 account in fractional parts of one hundred, we  
 shall arrive at something like the following re-  
 sult:—

B. SAWIN, Esq., in account with (BLANK)  
 GLORY.

| Cr.                      |     | Dr.                |
|--------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| By loss of one leg . . . | 20  | To one 675th three |
| " do. one arm . . .      | 15  | cheers in Fan-     |
| " do. four fingers . .   | 5   | euil Hall . . .    |
| " do. one eye . . .      | 10  | " do. do. on oc-   |
| " the breaking of six    |     | casion of presen-  |
| ribs . . . . .           | 6   | tation of sword    |
| " having served un-      |     | to Colonel         |
| der Colonel Cush-        |     | Wright . . . . .   |
| ing one month . . .      | 44  |                    |
|                          | 100 | 55                 |

Brought forward . . . 100

Brought forward . . . 55  
 To one suit of gray  
 clothes (ingeni-  
 ously unbecom-  
 ing) . . . . . 15  
 " musical enter-  
 tainments (drum  
 and fife six  
 months) . . . . . 5  
 " one dinner after  
 return . . . . . 1  
 " chance of pen-  
 sion . . . . . 1  
 " privilege of draw-  
 ing longbow dur-  
 ing rest of nat-  
 ural life . . . . . 23

100

E. E.

100

It should appear that Mr. Sawin found the  
 actual feast curiously the reverse of the bill  
 of fare advertised in Faneuil Hall and other  
 places. His primary object seems to have been  
 the making of his fortune. *Querenda pecunia  
 primum, virtus post nummos.* He hoisted sail  
 for Eldorado, and shipwrecked on Point Tribu-  
 lation. *Quid non mortalia pectora cogis, auri  
 sacra fames?* The speculation has sometimes  
 crossed my mind, in that dreary interval of  
 drought which intervenes between quarterly  
 stipendiary showers, that Providence, by the  
 creation of a money-tree, might have simplified  
 wonderfully the sometimes perplexing problem  
 of human life. We read of bread-trees, the  
 butter for which lies ready-churned in Irish  
 bogs. Milk-trees we are assured of in South  
 America, and stout Sir John Hawkins testifies  
 to water-trees in the Canaries. Boot-trees bear  
 abundantly in Lynn and elsewhere; and I have  
 seen, in the entries of the wealthy, hat-trees  
 with a fair show of fruit. A family-tree I once  
 cultivated myself, and found therefrom but a  
 scanty yield, and that quite tasteless and in-  
 nutritious. Of trees bearing men we are not  
 without examples; as those in the park of  
 Louis the Eleventh of France. Who has for-  
 gotten, moreover, that olive-tree, growing in  
 the Athenian's back-garden, with its strange  
 uxorious crop, for the general propagation of  
 which, as of a new and precious variety, the  
 philosopher Diogenes, hitherto uninterested in  
 arboriculture, was so zealous? In the *sylva* of  
 our own Southern States, the females of my  
 family have called my attention to the china-  
 tree. Not to multiply examples, I will barely  
 add to my list the birch-tree, in the smaller  
 branches of which has been implanted so  
 miraculous a virtue for communicating the  
 Latin and Greek languages, and which may  
 well, therefore, be classed among the trees pro-  
 ducing necessities of life,—*venerabile donum  
 fatalis virge.* That money-trees existed in the  
 golden age there want not prevalent reasons for  
 our believing. For does not the old proverb,  
 when it asserts that money does not grow on  
*every* bush, imply *a fortiori* that there were  
 certain bushes which did produce it? Again,  
 there is another ancient saw to the effect that



money is the *root* of all evil. From which two adages it may be safe to infer that the aforesaid species of tree first degenerated into a shrub, then absconded underground, and finally, in our iron age, vanished altogether. In favorable exposures it may be conjectured that a specimen or two survived to a great age, as in the garden of the Hesperides; and, indeed, what else could that tree in the Sixth *Æneid* have been, with a branch whereof the Trojan hero procured admission to a territory, for the entering of which money is a surer passport than to a certain other more profitable and too foreign kingdom? Whether these speculations of mine have any force in them, or whether they will not rather, by most readers, be deemed impertinent to the matter in hand, is a question which I leave to the determination of an indulgent posterity. That there were, in more primitive and happier times, shops where money was sold, — and that, too, on credit and at a bargain, — I take to be matter of demonstration. For what but a dealer in this article was that *Æolus* who supplied *Ulysses* with motive-power for his fleet in bags? what that *Ericus*, King of Sweden, who is said to have kept the winds in his cap? what, in more recent times, those Lapland *Nornas* who traded in favorable breezes? All which will appear the more clearly when we consider, that, even to this day, *raising the wind* is proverbial for raising money, and that brokers and banks were invented by the Venetians at a later period.

And now for the improvement of this digression. I find a parallel to Mr. Sawin's fortune in an adventure of my own. For, shortly after I had first broached to myself the before-stated natural-historical and archaeological theories, as I was passing, *hæc negotia penitus mecum revolvens*, through one of the obscure suburbs of our New England metropolis, my eye was attracted by these words upon a signboard, — **CHEAP CASH-STORE**. Here was at once the confirmation of my speculations, and the substance of my hopes. Here lingered the fragment of a happier past, or stretched out the first tremulous organic filament of a more fortunate future. Thus glowed the distant Mexico to the eyes of Sawin, as he looked through the dirty pane of the recruiting-office window, or speculated from the summit of that mirage-Pisgah which the imps of the bottle are so cunning to raise up. Already had my *Alnaschar*-fancy (even during that first half-believing glance) expended in various useful directions the funds to be obtained by pledging the manuscript of a proposed volume of discourses. Already did a clock ornament the tower of the Jaalam meeting-house, a gift appropriately, but modestly, commemorated in the parish and town records, both, for now many years, kept by myself. Already had my son *Seneca* completed his course at the University. Whether, for the moment, we may not be considered as actually lording it over those *Baratarias* with the vicereignty of which *Hope* invests us, and whether we are ever so warmly housed as in our Spanish castles, would afford

matter of argument. Enough that I found that signboard to be no other than a bait to the trap of a decayed grocer. Nevertheless, I bought a pound of dates (getting short weight by reason of immense flights of harpy flies who pursued and lighted upon their prey even in the very scales), which purchase I made not only with an eye to the little ones at home, but also as a figurative reproof of that too frequent habit of my mind, which, forgetting the due order of chronology, will often persuade me that the happy sceptre of Saturn is stretched over this *Astræa*-forsaken nineteenth century.

Having glanced at the ledger of *Glory* under the title *Sawin, B.*, let us extend our investigations, and discover if that instructive volume does not contain some charges more personally interesting to ourselves. I think we should be more economical of our resources, did we thoroughly appreciate the fact, that, whenever Brother Jonathan seems to be thrusting his hand into his own pocket, he is, in fact, picking ours. I confess that the late *muck* which the country has been running has materially changed my views as to the best method of raising revenue. If, by means of direct taxation, the bills for every extraordinary outlay were brought under our immediate eye, so that, like thrifty housekeepers, we could see where and how fast the money was going, we should be less likely to commit extravagances. At present, these things are managed in such a hugger-mugger way, that we know not what we pay for; the poor man is charged as much as the rich; and, while we are saving and scrimping at the spigot, the government is drawing off at the bung. If we could know that a part of the money we expend for tea and coffee goes to buy powder and balls, and that it is Mexican blood which makes the clothes on our backs more costly, it would set some of us athinking. During the present fall, I have often pictured to myself a government official entering my study and handing me the following bill: —

WASHINGTON, Sept. 30, 1848.

REV. HOMER WILBUR to Uncle Samuel,

|                                                                                                                                                                                   | Dr.           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| To his share of work done in Mexico on partnership account, sundry jobs, as below.                                                                                                |               |
| " killing, maiming and wounding about 5,000 Mexicans . . . . .                                                                                                                    | \$2.00        |
| " slaughtering one woman carrying water to wounded . . . . .                                                                                                                      | .10           |
| " extra work on two different Sabbaths (one bombardment and one assault), whereby the Mexicans were prevented from defiling themselves with the idolatries of high mass . . . . . | 3.50          |
| " throwing an especially fortunate and Protestant bombshell into the Cathedral at Vera Cruz, whereby several female Papists were slain at the altar . . . . .                     | .50           |
| " his proportion of cash paid for conquered territory . . . . .                                                                                                                   | 1.75          |
| " do. do. for conquering do. . . . .                                                                                                                                              | 1.50          |
| " manuring do. with new superior compost called "American Citizen" . . . . .                                                                                                      | .50           |
|                                                                                                                                                                                   | <u>\$9.85</u> |

|                                                                   |              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Brought forward                                                   | \$9.85       |
| To extending the area of freedom and Protes-<br>tantism . . . . . | .01          |
| " glory . . . . .                                                 | .01          |
|                                                                   | <hr/> \$9.87 |

*Immediate payment is requested.*

N. B. Thankful for former favors, U. S. requests a continuance of patronage. Orders executed with neatness and despatch. Terms as low as those of any other contractor for the same kind and style of work.

I can fancy the official answering my look of horror with—"Yes, Sir, it looks like a high charge, Sir; but in these days slaughtering is slaughtering." Verily, I would that every one understood that it was; for it goes about obtaining money under the false pretence of being glory. For me, I have an imagination which plays me uncomfortable tricks. It happens to me sometimes to see a slaughterer on his way home from his day's work, and forthwith my imagination puts a cocked-hat upon his head and epaulettes upon his shoulders, and sets him up as a candidate for the Presidency. So, also, on a recent public occasion, as the place assigned to the "Reverend Clergy" is just behind that of "Officers of the Army and Navy" in processions, it was my fortune to be seated at the dinner-table over against one of these respectable persons. He was arrayed as (out of his own profession) only kings, court-officers, and footmen are in Europe, and Indians in America. Now what does my over-officious imagination but set to work upon him, strip him of his gay livery, and present him to me coatless, his trousers thrust into the tops of a pair of boots thick with clotted blood, and a basket on his arm out of which lolled a gore-smeared axe, thereby destroying my relish for the temporal mercies upon the board before me!—H. W.]

#### NO. IX

### A THIRD LETTER FROM B. SAWIN, ESQ.

[UPON the following letter slender comment will be needful. In what river Selennus has Mr. Sawin bathed, that he has become so swiftly oblivious of his former loves? From an ardent and (as befits a soldier) confident wooer of that coy bride, the popular favor, we see him subside of a sudden into the (I trust not jilted) Cincinnatus, returning to his plough with a gozied sized branch of willow in his hand; figuratively returning, however, to a figurative plough, and from no profound affection for that honored implement of husbandry (for which, indeed, Mr. Sawin never displayed any decided predilection), but in order to be gracefully summoned therefrom to more congenial labors. It should seem that the character of the ancient

Dictator had become part of the recognized stock of our modern political comedy, though, as our term of office extends to a quadrennial length, the parallel is not so minutely exact as could be desired. It is sufficiently so, however, for purposes of scenic representation. An humble cottage (if built of logs, the better) forms the Arcadian background of the stage. This rustic paradise is labelled Ashland, Jaalam, North Bend, Marshfield, Kinderhook, or Bâton Rouge, as occasion demands. Before the door stands a something with one handle (the other painted in proper perspective), which represents, in happy ideal vagueness, the plough. To this the defeated candidate rushes with delirious joy, welcomed as a father by appropriate groups of happy laborers, or from it the successful one is torn with difficulty, sustained alone by a noble sense of public duty. Only I have observed, that, if the scene be laid at Bâton Rouge or Ashland, the laborers are kept carefully in the background, and are heard to shout from behind the scenes in a singular tone resembling ululation, and accompanied by a sound not unlike vigorous clapping. This, however, may be artistically in keeping with the habits of the rustic population of those localities. The precise connection between agricultural pursuits and statesmanship I have not been able, after diligent inquiry, to discover. But, that my investigations may not be barren of all fruit, I will mention one curious statistical fact, which I consider thoroughly established, namely, that no real farmer ever attains practically beyond a seat in the General Court, however theoretically qualified for more exalted station.

It is probable that some other prospect has been opened to Mr. Sawin, and that he has not made this great sacrifice without some definite understanding in regard to a seat in the cabinet or a foreign mission. It may be supposed that we of Jaalam were not untouched by a feeling of villatic pride in beholding our townsman occupying so large a space in the public eye. And to me, deeply revolving the qualifications necessary to a candidate in these frugal times, those of Mr. S. seemed peculiarly adapted to a successful campaign. The loss of a leg, an arm, an eye, and four fingers reduced him so nearly to the condition of a *vox et praterea nihil* that I could think of nothing but the loss of his head by which his chance could have been bettered. But since he has chosen to balk our suffrages, we must content ourselves with what we can get, remembering *lactucas non esse dandas, dum cardui sufficient.*—H. W.]

I SPOSE you recollect thet I explained my gennle views

In the last billet thet I writ, 'way down from Veery Cruze,

Jest arter I'd a kin' o' ben spontanously sot up

To run unanannerously fer the Preserden-tial cup;

O' course it worn't no wish o' mine, 't wuz  
ferfley distressin',  
But poppeler enthusiasm gut so almighty  
pressin'  
Thet, though like sixty all along I fumed  
an' fussed an' sorrered,  
There did'n't seem no ways to stop their  
bringin' on me forrerd:  
Fact is, they udged the matter so, I  
could n't help admittin'  
The Father o' his Country's shoes no feet  
but mine 'ould fit in,  
Besides the savin' o' the soles fer ages to  
succeed,  
Seein' thet with one wannut foot, a pair'd  
be more 'n I need;  
An', tell ye wut, them shoes 'll want a  
thund'rin sight o' patchin',  
Ef this ere fashion is to last we've gut into  
o' hatchin'  
A pair o' second Washintons fer every new  
election, —  
Though, fer ez number one's consarned, I  
don't make no objection.

I wuz agoin' on to say thet wen at fust I saw  
The masses would stick to 't I wuz the  
Country's father-'n-law,  
(They would ha' hed it *Father*, but I told  
'em 't would n't du,  
Coz thet wuz sutthin' of a sort they  
could n't split in tu,  
An' Washinton hed hed the thing laid  
fairly to his door,  
Nor dars n't say 't worn't his'n, much ez  
sixty year afore,)  
But 't aint no matter ez to thet; wen I wuz  
nomernated,  
'T worn't natur but wut I should feel con-  
sid'able elated,  
An' wile the hooraw o' the thing wuz kind  
o' noo an' fresh,  
I thought our ticket would ha' caird the  
country with a resh.

Sence I've come hum, though, an' looked  
round, I think I seem to find  
Strong argimunts ez thick ez fleas to make  
me change my mind;  
It's clear to any one whose brain aint fur  
gone in a phthisis,  
Thet hail Columby's happy land is goin'  
thru a crisis,  
An' 't would n't noways du to hev the  
people's mind distracted

By bein' all to once by sev'ral pop'lar  
names attackted;  
'T would save holl haycartloads o' fuss an'  
three four months o' jaw,  
Ef some illustrious paytriot should back out  
an' withdraw;  
So, ez I aint a crooked stick, jest like —  
like ole (I swow,  
I dunno ez I know his name) — I'll go  
back to my plough.  
Wenever an Amerikin distinguished poli-  
tishin  
Begins to try et wut they call definin' his  
posishin,  
Wal, I, fer one, feel sure he aint gut nothin'  
to define;  
It's so nine cases out o' ten, but jest that  
tenth is mine;  
An' 't aint no more 'n is proper 'n' right in  
sech a sitooation  
To hint the course you think 'll be the  
savin' o' the nation;  
To funk right out o' p'lit'cal strife aint  
thought to be the thing,  
Without you deacon off the toon you want  
your folks should sing;  
So I edvise the noomrous friends thet's in  
one boat with me  
To jest up killick, jam right down their  
hellum hard alea,  
Haul the sheets taut, an', layin' out upon  
the Suthun tack,  
Make fer the safest port they can, wich, I  
think, is Ole Zack.

Next thing you 'll want to know, I spose,  
wut argimunts I seem  
To see thet makes me think this ere 'll be  
the strongest team;  
Fust place, I've ben consid'ble round in  
bar-rooms an' saloons  
Agetherin' public sentiment, 'mongst Dem-  
mercerats and Coons,  
An' 't aint ve'y often thet I meet a chap  
but wut goes in  
Fer Rough an' Ready, fair an' square, hufs,  
taller, horns, an' skin;  
I don't deny but wut, fer one, ez fur ez I  
could see,  
I did n't like at fust the Pheladelphia nom-  
ernee:  
I could ha' pinted to a man thet wuz, I  
guess, a peg  
Higher than him, — a soger, tu, an' with a  
wooden leg;



But every day with more an' more o' Tay-  
lor zeal I'm burnin',  
Seein' wich way the tide thet sets to office  
is aturnin';  
Wy, into Bellers's we notched the votes  
down on three sticks, —  
'T wuz Birdofredum *one*, Cass *ought*, an'  
Taylor *twenty-six*,  
An' bein' the on'y canderdate thet wuz  
upon the ground,  
They said 't wuz no more 'n right thet I  
should pay the drinks all round;  
Ef I'd expected sech a trick, I would n't  
ha' cut my foot  
By goin' an' votin' fer myself like a con-  
sumed coot;  
It did n't make no deff'rence, though; I  
wish I may be cust,  
Ef Bellers wuz n't slim enough to say he  
would n't trust !

Another pint thet influences the minds o'  
sober jedges  
Is thet the Gin'ral hez n't guttied hand an'  
foot with pledges;  
He hez n't told ye wut he is, an' so there  
aint no knowin'  
But wut he may turn out to be the best  
there is agoin';  
This, at the on'y spot thet pinched, the shoe  
directly eases,  
Coz every one is free to 'xpect percisely  
wut he pleases:  
I want free-trade; you don't; the Gin'ral  
is n't bound to neither; —  
I vote my way; you, youn; an' both air  
sooted to a T there.  
Ole Rough an' Ready, tu, 's a Wig, but  
without bein' ultry;  
He's like a holsome hayin' day, thet's  
warm, but is n't sultry;  
He's jest wut I should call myself, a kin'  
o' *scratch* ez 't ware,  
Thet aint exacy all a wig nor wholly your  
own hair;  
I've ben a Wig three weeks myself, jest o'  
this mod'rate sort,  
An' don't feel them an' Demmercrats so  
defferent ez I thought;  
They both act pooty much alike, an' push  
an' scrouge an' cus;  
They're like two pickpockets in league fer  
Uncle Samwell's pus;  
Each takes a side, an' then they squeeze  
the ole man in between 'em,

Turn all his pockets wrong side out an'  
quick ez lightnin' clean 'em;  
To nary one on 'em I'd trust a secon'-  
handed rail  
No furdur off 'an I could sling a bullock  
by the tail.

Webster sot matters right in thet air Mash-  
fiel' speech o' his'n; —  
"Taylor," sez he, "aint nary ways the one  
thet I'd a chizzen,  
Nor he aint fittin' fer the place, an' like  
ez not he aint  
No more 'n a tough ole bullethead, an' no  
gret of a saint;  
But then," sez he, "obsarve my pint, he's  
jest ez good to vote fer  
Ez though the greasin' on him worn't a  
thing to hire Choate fer;  
Aint it ez easy done to drop a ballot in a  
box  
Fer one ez 't is fer t' other, fer the bull-dog  
ez the fox?"  
It takes a mind like Dannel's, fact, ez big  
ez all ou' doors,  
To find out thet it looks like rain arter it  
fairly pours;  
I'gree with him, it aint so dreffle trouble-  
some to vote  
Fer Taylor arter all, — it's jest to go an'  
change your coat;  
Wen he's once greased, you'll swaller him  
an' never know on 't, scurce,  
Unless he scratches, goin' down, with them  
'ere Gin'ral's spurs.  
I've ben a votin' Demmercrat, ez reg'lar  
as a clock,  
But don't find goin' Taylor gives my narves  
no gret 'f a shock;  
Truth is, the cutest leadin' Wigs, ever sence  
fust they found  
Wich side the bread gut buttered on, hev  
kep' a edgin' round;  
They kin' o' slipt the planks frum out th'  
ole platform one by one  
An' made it gradooally noo, 'fore folks  
know'd wut wuz done,  
Till, fur 'z I know, there aint an inch thet  
I could lay my han' on,  
But I, or any Demmercrat, feels comf'table  
to stan' on,  
An' ole Wig doctrines act'lly look, their  
occ'pants bein' gone,  
Lonesome ez steddles on a mash without no  
hayricks on.



I spose it's time now I should give my  
thoughts upon the plan,  
Thet chipped the shell at Buffalo, o' settin'  
up ole Van.  
I used to vote fer Martin, but, I swan, I'm  
clean disgusted, —  
He aint the man thet I can say is fittin' to  
be trusted;  
He aint half antislav'ry 'nough, nor I aint  
sure, ez some be,  
He 'd go in fer abolishin' the Deestrick o'  
Columby;  
An', now I come to racollec', it kin' o' makes  
me sick 'z  
A horse, to think o' wut he wuz in eighteen  
thirty-six.  
An' then, another thing; — I guess, though  
mebby I am wrong,  
This Buff'lo plaster aint agoin' to dror al-  
mighty strong;  
Some folks, I know, hev gut th' idee thet  
No'thun dough 'll rise,  
Though, 'fore I see it riz an' baked, I  
would n't trust my eyes;  
'T will take more emptins, a long chalk,  
than this noo party 's gut,  
To give sech heavy cakes ez them a start, I  
tell ye wut.  
But even ef they caird the day, there would  
n't be no endurin'  
To stan' upon a platform with sech critters  
ez Van Buren; —  
An' his son John, tu, I can't think how thet  
'ere chap should dare  
To speak ez he doos; wy, they say he used  
to cuss an' swear!  
I spose he never read the hymn thet tells  
how down the stairs  
A feller with long legs wuz throwed thet  
would n't say his prayers.  
This brings me to another pint: the leaders  
o' the party  
Aint jest sech men ez I can act along with  
free an' hearty;  
They aint not quite respectable, an' wen a  
feller's morrils  
Don't toe the straightest kin' o' mark, wy,  
him an' me jest quarrels.  
I went to a free soil meetin' once, an' wut  
d' ye think I see?  
A feller was aspoutin' there thet act'lly  
come to me,  
About two year ago last spring, ez nigh ez  
I can jedge,

An' axed me ef I did n't want to sign the  
Temprunce pledge!  
He 's one o' them that goes about an' sez  
you hed n't oughter  
Drink nothin', mornin', noon, or night,  
stronger 'an Taunton water.  
There 's one rule I 've ben guided by, in  
settlin' how to vote, ollers, —  
I take the side thet *is n't* took by them  
consarned teetotallers.

Ez fer the niggers, I 've ben South, an' thet  
hez changed my min';  
A lazier, more ongrateful set you could n't  
nowers fin'.  
You know I mentioned in my last thet I  
should buy a nigger,  
Ef I could make a purchase at a pooty  
mod'rate figger;  
So, ez there 's nothin' in the world I'm  
fonder of 'an gunnin',  
I closed a bargain finally to take a feller  
runnin'.  
I shou'dered queen's-arm an' stumped out,  
an' wen I come t' th' swamp,  
'T worn't very long afore I gut upon the  
nest o' Pomp;  
I come acrost a kin' o' hut, an', playin round  
the door,  
Some little woolly-headed cubs, ez many 'z  
six or more.  
At fust I thought o' firin', but *think twice* is  
safest ollers;  
There aint, thinks I, not one on 'em but 's  
wuth his twenty dollars,  
Or would be, ef I hed 'em back into a  
Christian land, —  
How temptin' all on 'em would look upon  
an auction-stand!  
(Not but wut I hate Slavery, in th' abstract,  
stem to starn, —  
I leave it ware our fathers did, a privit  
State consarn.)  
Soon 'z they see me, they yelled an' run,  
but Pomp wuz out aboein'  
A leetle patch o' corn he hed, or else there  
aint no knowin'  
He would n't ha' took a pop at me; but I  
hed gut the start,  
An' wen he looked, I vow he groaned ez  
though he 'd broke his heart;  
He done it like a wite man, tu, ez nat'ral ez  
a pictur,  
The imp'dunt, pis'nous hypocrite! wus 'an  
a boy constrictur.

"You can't gum *me*, I tell ye now, an' so  
 you need n't try,  
 I 'xpect my eye-teeth every mail, so jest  
 shet up," sez I.  
 "Don't go to actin' ugly now, or else I'll  
 let her strip,  
 You'd best draw kindly, seein' 'z how I've  
 gut ye on the hip;  
 Besides, you darned ole fool, it aint no gret  
 of a disaster  
 To be benev'lently druv back to a contented  
 master,  
 Ware you hed Christian priv'ledges you  
 don't seem quite aware on,  
 Or you'd ha' never run away from bein'  
 well took care on;  
 Ez fer kin' treatment, wy, he wuz so fond  
 on ye, he said  
 He'd give a fifty spot right out, to git ye,  
 'live or dead;  
 Wite folks aint sot by half ez much; 'mem-  
 ber I run away,  
 Wen I wuz bound to Cap'n Jakes, to Mat-  
 tysquamscot Bay;  
 Don' know him, likely? Spose not; wal,  
 the mean old codger went  
 An' offered — wut reward, think? Wal,  
 it worn't no *less* 'n a cent."  
  
 Wal, I jest gut 'em into line, an' druv 'em  
 on afore me;  
 The pis'nous brutes, I'd no idee o' the ill-  
 will they bore me;  
 We walked till som'ers about noon, an'  
 then it grew so hot  
 I thought it best to camp awile, so I chose  
 out a spot  
 Jest under a magnoly tree, an' there right  
 down I sot;  
 Then I unstrapped my wooden leg, coz it  
 begun to chafe,  
 An' laid it down 'longside o' me, supposin'  
 all wuz safe;  
 I made my darkies all set down around me  
 in a ring,  
 An' sot an' kin' o' ciphered up how much  
 the lot would bring;  
 But, wile I dranked the peaceful cup of a  
 pure heart an' min'  
 (Mixed with some whiskey, now an' then),  
 Pomp he snaked up behin',  
 An' creepin' grad'lly close tu, ez quiet ez a  
 mink,  
 Jest grabbed my leg, an' then pulled foot,  
 quicker 'an you could wink,

An', come to look, they each on 'em hed  
 gut behin' a tree,  
 An' Pomp poked out the leg a piece, jest  
 so ez I could see,  
 An' yelled to me to throw away my pistils  
 an' my gun,  
 Or else thet they'd cair off the leg, an'  
 fairly cut an' run.  
 I vow I did n't b'lieve there wuz a decent  
 alligatur  
 Thet hed a heart so destitoot o' common  
 human natur;  
 However, ez there worn't no help, I finally  
 give in  
 An' heft my arms away to git my leg safe  
 back agin.  
  
 Pomp gethered all the weapins up, an' then  
 he come an' grinned,  
 He showed his ivory some, I guess, an' sez,  
 "You're fairly pinned;  
 Jest buckle on your leg agin, an' git right  
 up 'come,  
 'T wun't du fer fammerly men like me to  
 be so long frum hum."  
 At fust I put my foot right down an' swore  
 I would n't budge.  
 "Jest ez you choose," sez he, quite cool,  
 "either be shot or trudge."  
 So this black-hearted monster took an'  
 act'lly druv me back  
 Along the very footmarks o' my happy  
 mornin' track,  
 An' kep' me pris'n'r 'bout six months, an'  
 worked me, tu, like sin,  
 Till I hed gut his corn an' his Carliny  
 taters in;  
 He made me larn him readin', tu (although  
 the crittur saw  
 How much it hut my morril sense to act  
 agin the law),  
 So'st he could read a Bible he'd gut; an'  
 axed ef I could pint  
 The North Star out; but there I put his  
 nose some out o' jint,  
 Fer I weeled roun' about sou'west, an',  
 lookin' up a bit,  
 Picked out a middlin' shiny one an' tole  
 him thet wuz it.  
 Fin'lly he took me to the door, an' givin'  
 me a kick,  
 Sez, "Ef you know wut's best fer ye, be  
 off, now, double-quick;  
 The winter-time's a comin' on, an' though  
 I gut ye cheap,

You 're so darned lazy, I don't think you 're  
hardly wuth your keep;  
Besides, the childrin 's growin' up, an' you  
aint jest the model  
I'd like to hev 'em immertate, an' so you 'd  
better toddle!"

Now is there anythin' on airth 'll ever prove  
to me

Thet renegader slaves like him air fit fer  
bein' free?

D' you think they 'll suck me in to jine the  
Buff'lo chaps, an' them

Rank infidels thet go agin the Scriptur'l  
cus o' Shem?

Not by a jugfull! sooner 'n thet, I'd go  
thru fire an' water;

Wen I hev once made up my mind, a  
meet'nhus aint sotter;

No, not though all the crows thet flies to  
pick my bones wuz cawin', —

I guess we 're in a Christian land, —

Yourn,

BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN.

[Here, patient reader, we take leave of each other, I trust with some mutual satisfaction. I say *patient*, for I love not that kind which skims dippingly over the surface of the page, as swallows over a pool before rain. By such no pearls shall be gathered. But if no pearls there be (as, indeed, the world is not without example of books wherefrom the longest-winded diver shall bring up no more than his proper handful of mud), yet let us hope than an oyster or two may reward adequate perseverance. If neither pearls nor oysters, yet is patience itself a gem worth diving deeply for.

It may seem to some that too much space has been usurped by my own private lucubrations, and some may be fain to bring against me that old jest of him who preached all his hearers out of the meeting-house save only the sexton, who, remaining for yet a little space, from a sense of official duty, at last gave out also, and, presenting the keys, humbly requested our preacher to lock the doors, when he should have wholly relieved himself of his testimony. I confess to a satisfaction in the self act of preaching, nor do I esteem a discourse to be wholly thrown away even upon a sleeping or unintelligent auditory. I cannot easily believe that the Gospel of Saint John, which Jacques Cartier ordered to be read in the Latin tongue to the Canadian savages, upon his first meeting with them, fell altogether upon stony ground. For the earnestness of the preacher is a sermon appreciable by dumbest intellects and most alien ears. In this wise did Episcopius convert many to his opinions, who yet understood not the language in which he discoursed. The chief

thing is that the messenger believe that he has an authentic message to deliver. For counterfeit messengers that mode of treatment which Father John de Plano Carпинi relates to have prevailed among the Tartars would seem effectual, and, perhaps, deserved enough. For my own part, I may lay claim to so much of the spirit of martyrdom as would have led me to go into banishment with those clergymen whom Alphonso the Sixth of Portugal drove out of his kingdom for refusing to shorten their pulpit eloquence. It is possible, that, having been invited into my brother Biglow's desk, I may have been too little scrupulous in using it for the venting of my own peculiar doctrines to a congregation drawn together in the expectation and with the desire of hearing him.

I am not wholly unconscious of a peculiarity of mental organization which impels me, like the railroad-engine with its train of cars, to run backward for a short distance in order to obtain a fairer start. I may compare myself to one fishing from the rocks when the sea runs high, who, misinterpreting the suction of the undertow for the biting of some larger fish, jerks suddenly, and finds that he has *caught bottom*, hauling in upon the end of his line a trail of various *algæ*, among which, nevertheless, the naturalist may haply find somewhat to repay the disappointment of the angler. Yet have I conscientiously endeavored to adapt myself to the impatient temper of the age, daily degenerating more and more from the high standard of our pristine New England. To the catalogue of lost arts I would mournfully add also that of listening to two-hour sermons. Surely we have been abridged into a race of pygmies. For, truly, in those of the old discourses yet subsisting to us in print, the endless spinal column of divisions and subdivisions can be likened to nothing so exactly as to the vertebrae of the saurians, whence the theorist may conjecture a race of Anakim proportionate to the withstanding of these other monsters. I say Anakim rather than Nephelim, because there seem reasons for supposing that the race of those whose heads (though no giants) are constantly enveloped in clouds (which that name imports) will never become extinct. The attempt to vanquish the innumerable *heads* of one of those afore-mentioned discourses may supply us with a plausible interpretation of the second labor of Hercules, and his successful experiment with fire affords us a useful precedent.

But while I lament the degeneracy of the age in this regard, I cannot refuse to succumb to its influence. Looking out through my study-window, I see Mr. Biglow at a distance busy in gathering his Baldwins, of which, to judge by the number of barrels lying about under the trees, his crop is more abundant than my own, — by which sight I am admonished to turn to those orchards of the mind wherein my labors may be more prospered, and apply myself diligently to the preparation of my next Sabbath's discourse. — H. W.]

MELIBŒUS-HIPPONAX

THE  
Biglow Papers,  
SECOND SERIES.

"Ἔστιν ἄρ' ὁ ἰδιωτισμὸς ἐνίοτε τοῦ κόσμου παραπολὺ ἐμφανιστικώτερον.

LONGINUS.

"J'aimerais mieux que mon fils apprînt aux tavernes à parler, qu'aux escholes de la parlerie."

MONTAIGNE.

"Unser Sprach ist auch ein Sprach und kan so wohl ein Sach nennen als die Lateiner saccus."

FISCHART.

"Vim rebus aliquando ipsa verborum humilitas affert."

QUINTILIANUS.

"O ma lengo,

Plantarèy une estèlo à toun froun encrumit !"

JASMIN.

"Multos enim, quibus loquendi ratio non desit, invenias, quos curiose potius loqui dixeris quam Latine; quomodo et illa Attica anus Theophrastum, hominem aliqui disertissimum, annotata unius affectione verbi, hospitem dixit, nec alio se id deprehendisse interrogata respondit, quam quod nimium Attice loqueretur." —

QUINTILIANUS.  
"Et Anglice sermonicari solebat populo, sed secundum linguam Norfolchie ubi natus et nutritus erat." —

CRONICA JOCELINI.  
"La politique est une pierre attachée au cou de la littérature, et qui en moins de six mois la submerge. . . . Cette politique va offenser mortellement une moitié des lecteurs, et ennuyer l'autre qui l'a trouvée bien autrement spéciale et énergique dans le journal du matin." — HENRI BEYLE.

THE best introduction to the Second Series of the Biglow Papers is to be found in Lowell's prose papers on political topics contributed to the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *North American Review* from 1858 to 1860, some of which have been reprinted in the fifth volume of the Riverside edition of his Writings. Just before Mr. Lincoln's election in 1860 he wrote: "We are approaching a crisis in our domestic policy more momentous than any that has arisen since we became a nation." The crisis arrived, and during 1861 his political sagacity, his ardent patriotism, his moral genius were displayed in a series of essays which did much to enlighten and confirm the roused spirit of the Northern people. But more was wanting of him. His verse could reach more ears than his or any other writer's prose. He was urged to write fresh Biglow Papers, and in a letter dated the last day of the year 1860, Lowell wrote: "As for new Biglow Papers, God knows how I should like to write them, if they would only make me as they did before. But I am so occupied and bothered that I have no time to

brood, which with me is as needful a preliminary to hatching anything as with a clucking hen. However, I am going to try my hand, and see what comes of it." It was a year, however, before the first of the new series appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and he wrote of it to Miss Norton: "I have been writing a *Biglow Paper*, and I feel as nervous about it as a young author not yet weaned of public favor. It was clean against my critical judgment, for I don't believe in resuscitations, — we hear no good of the posthumous Lazarus, — but I may get into the vein and do some good." The first of the series was published in January, 1862, and the stimulus Lowell needed came quickly in the Trent affair, which drew out of him at once *Mason and Slidell: a Yankee Idyll*, which appeared in February. "If I am not mistaken," he wrote to Mr. Fields on sending it, "it will take." The third followed in March, and Lowell wrote again to Mr. Fields: "As for the *Biglow* — glad you like it. If not so good as the others, the public will be sure to. I think well of the *Fable* and believe there is nothing exotic therein. I am going to kill Wilbur before long, and give a 'would-have-been' obituary on him in the American style. That is, for example, 'he wrote no epic, but if he had, he would have been,' etc. I don't know how many of these future-conditional geniuses we have produced — many score, certainly. . . . Good-by-yours — with a series of Biglows rising, like the visionary kings before Macbeth, to destroy all present satisfaction."

Lowell did not kill Parson Wilbur immediately. Three more numbers followed, the fourth, fifth, and sixth, in April, May, and June. Then there was an interval when the rustic muse refused to come at a call. "It's no use," the poet wrote June 5, 1862, to Fields, who had evidently been asking for the July portion; "I reverse the gospel difficulty, and while the flesh is willing enough the spirit is weak. My brain must lie fallow a spell — there is no superphosphate for those worn-out fields. Better no crop than small potatoes. I want to have the passion of the thing on me again and beget lusty Biglows. I am all the more dejected because you have treated me so well. But I must rest awhile. My brain is out of kilter." Mr. Fields returned to the attack the next month, and Lowell wrote him a humorous letter in which he expressed his amazement at having kept his word about the six already written, and had some hopes that two ideas he cherished might come to something. At last he seems to have fallen back on his scheme for putting Parson Wilbur to death, and made it an excuse for the seventh paper, *Latest Views of Mr. Biglow*, which appeared in *The Atlantic* for February, 1863. Other occupations at this time



engrossed him, and he again wrote to Mr. Fields, October 18, 1864: "Firstly, whar's Biglow? Let echo repeat her customary observation, adding only that I began one, but it would not go. I had idees in plenty, but all I could do, they would not marry themselves to immortal worse. Not only did I wish to write, for there was a chance of a thousand, but I wanted money — so there can be no doubt I was in earnest." It was not till peace was imminent that he wrote again, the moving tenth satire, which was published in April, 1865. The final paper, called out by the Johnson retrograde movement, was published in *The Atlantic* for May, 1866. The papers numbered VIII. and IX. did not appear in print until the book was published in the fall of the same year.

Lowell more than once spoke of this second series of *Biglow Papers* as in his judgment better than the first. In a letter to Thomas Hughes twenty years after the book appeared, he wrote as follows: "Pray, who is 'F. T.,' who has been writing about me in so friendly a way in the *Cornhill*? He is a little out now and then, but strikes me as in the main judicious. He is wrong about the second part of the *Biglow Papers*. I think had he read these first, he would have seen they had more permanent qualities than their predecessors, less fun and more humor perhaps. And pray what natural scenery would he have me describe but my own? If you know him, tell him I think two European birds beat any of ours, the nightingale and the blackbird. The lark beats any of them also by sentiment and association, though not vocally. I suppose I should have been a more poetical poet if I had not been a professor. A poet should feed on nothing but poetry as they used to say a drone could be turned into a queen-bee by a diet of bee-bread."

When the book appeared it bore a dedication to E. R. Hoar, and was introduced by the essay on the Yankee form of English speech, which, as we have seen, he had long ago proposed writing. This Introduction is so distinctly an essay that it has been thought best to print it as an appendix to this volume, rather than allow it to break in upon the pages of verse. There is, however, one passage in it which may be repeated here, since it bears directly upon the poem which serves as a sort of prelude to the series.

"The only attempt I had ever made at anything like a pastoral (if that may be called an attempt which was the result almost of pure accident) was in *The Courtin'*. While the introduction to the First Series was going through the press, I received word from the printer that there was a blank page left which must be filled. I sat down at once and improvised another fictitious 'notice of the press,' in which,

because verse would fill up space more cheaply than prose, I inserted an extract from a supposed ballad of Mr. Biglow. I kept no copy of it, and the printer, as directed, cut it off when the gap was filled. Presently I began to receive letters asking for the rest of it, sometimes for the *balance* of it. I had none, but to answer such demands, I patched a conclusion upon it in a later edition. Those who had only the first continued to importune me. Afterward, being asked to write it out as an autograph for the Baltimore Sanitary Commission Fair, I added other verses, into some of which I infused a little more sentiment in a homely way, and after a fashion completed it by sketching in the characters and making a connected story. Most likely I have spoiled it, but I shall put it at the end of this Introduction, to answer once for all those kindly importunings."

### THE COURTIN'

God makes sech nights, all white an' still  
Fur 'z you can look or listen,  
Moonshine an' snow on field an' hill,  
All silence an' all glisten.

Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown  
An' peeked in thru' the winder,  
An' there sot Huld' all alone,  
'ith no one nigh to hender.

A fireplace filled the room's one side  
With half a cord o' wood in —  
There war n't no stoves (tell comfort died)  
To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out  
Towards the pootiest, bless her,  
An' leetle flames danced all about  
The chiny on the dresser.

Agin the chimbley crook-necks hung,  
An' in amongst 'em rusted  
The ole queen's-arm thet gran'ther Young  
Fetched back f'om Concord busted.

The very room, coz she was in,  
Seemed warm f'om floor to ceilin',  
An' she looked full ez rosy agin  
Ez the apples she was peelin'.

'T was kin' o' kingdom-come to look  
On sech a blessed cretur,  
A dogrose blushin' to a brook  
Ain't modester nor sweeter.

He was six foot o' man, A 1,  
Clear grit an' human natur',  
None could n't quicker pitch a ton  
Nor dror a furrer straighter.

He 'd sparked it with full twenty gals,  
Hed squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em,  
Fust this one, an' then thet, by spells —  
All is, he could n't love 'em.

But long o' her his veins 'ould run  
All crinkly like curled maple,  
The side she breshed felt full o' sun  
Ez a south slope in Ap'il.

She thought no v'ice hed sech a swing  
Ez hisn in the choir;  
My! when he made Ole Hunderd ring,  
She *knowed* the Lord was nigher.

An' she 'd blush scarlit, right in prayer,  
When her new meetin'-bunnet  
Felt somehow thru' its crown a pair  
O' blue eyes sot upun it.

Thet night, I tell ye, she looked *some*!  
She seemed to 've gut a new soul,  
For she felt sartin-sure he 'd come,  
Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,  
A-raspin' on the scraper, —  
All ways to once her feelins flew  
Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,  
Some doubtfe o' the sekle,  
His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,  
But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yit she gin her cheer a jerk  
Ez though she wished him furrer,  
An' on her apples kep' to work,  
Parin' away like murder.

"You want to see my Pa, I s'pose?"  
"Wal . . . no . . . I come dasignin'!" —  
"To see my Ma? She's sprinklin' clo'es  
Agin to-morrer's i'nin'."

To say why gals acts so or so,  
Or don't, 'ould be persumin';  
Mebby to mean *yes* an' say *no*  
Comes nateral to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,  
Then stood a spell on t' other,  
An' on which one he felt the wust  
He could n't ha' told ye nuther.

Says he, "I 'd better call agin;"  
Says she, "Think likely, Mister:"  
Thet last word pricked him like a pin,  
An' . . . Wal, he up an' kist her.

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips,  
Huldy sot pale ez ashes,  
All kin' o' smily roun' the lips  
An' teary roun' the lashes.

For she was jes' the quiet kind  
Whose naturs never vary,  
Like streams that keep a summer mind  
Snowhid in Jenooary.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued  
Too tight for all expressin',  
Tell mother see how metters stood,  
An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

Then her red come back like the tide  
Down to the Bay o' Fundy,  
An' all I know is they was cried  
In meetin' come nex' Sunday.

## THE BIGLOW PAPERS

### SECOND SERIES

No. I

BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN, ESQ., TO  
MR. HOSEA BIGLOW

LETTER FROM THE REVEREND HOMER  
WILBUR, M. A., ENCLOSING THE EPISTLE  
AFORESAID

JAALAM, 15th Nov., 1861.

It is not from any idle wish to obtrude my humble person with undue prominence upon the publick view that I resume my pen upon the present occasion. *Juniore ad labores*. But having been a main instrument in rescuing the talent of my young parish-ioner from being buried in the ground, by giving it such warrant with the world as could be derived from a name already

widely known by several printed discourses (all of which I may be permitted without immodesty to state have been deemed worthy of preservation in the Library of Harvard College by my esteemed friend Mr. Sibley), it seemed becoming that I should not only testify to the genuineness of the following production, but call attention to it, the more as Mr. Biglow had so long been silent as to be in danger of absolute oblivion. I insinuate no claim to any share in the authorship (*vix ea nostra voco*) of the works already published by Mr. Biglow, but merely take to myself the credit of having fulfilled toward them the office of taster (*experto crede*), who, having first tried, could afterward bear witness (*credenzen*) it was aptly named by the Germans), an office always arduous, and sometimes even dangerous, as in the case of those devoted persons who venture their lives in the deglutition of patent medicines (*dolus latet in generalibus*, there is deceit in the most of them) and thereafter are wonderfully preserved long enough to append their signatures to testimonials in the diurnal and hebdomadal prints. I say not this as covertly glancing at the authors of certain manuscripts which have been submitted to my literary judgment (though an epick in twenty-four books on the "Taking of Jericho" might, save for the prudent forethought of Mrs. Wilbur in secreting the same just as I had arrived beneath the walls and was beginning a catalogue of the various horns and their blowers, too ambitiously emulous in longanimity of Homer's list of ships, might, I say, have rendered frustrate any hope I could entertain *vacare Musis* for the small remainder of my days), but only the further to secure myself against any imputation of unseemly forthputting. I will barely subjoin, in this connexion, that, whereas Job was left to desire, in the soreness of his heart, that his adversary had written a book, as perchance misanthropically wishing to indite a review thereof, yet was not Satan allowed so far to tempt him as to send Bildad, Eliphaz, and Zophar each with an unprinted work in his wallet to be submitted to his censure. But of this enough. Were I in need of other excuse, I might add that I write by the express desire of Mr. Biglow himself, whose entire winter leisure is occupied, as he assures me, in an-

swering demands for autographs, a labor exacting enough in itself, and egregiously so to him, who, being no ready penman, cannot sign so much as his name without strange contortions of the face (his nose, even, being essential to complete success) and painfully suppressed Saint-Vitus-dance of every muscle in his body. This, with his having been put in the Commission of the Peace by our excellent Governor (*O, si sic omnes!*) immediately on his accession to office, keeps him continually employed. *Haud inexpertus loquor*, having for many years written myself J. P., and being not seldom applied to for specimens of my chirography, a request to which I have sometimes over weakly assented, believing as I do that nothing written of set purpose can properly be called an autograph, but only those unpremeditated sallies and lively runnings which betray the fireside Man instead of the hunted Notoriety doubling on his pursuers. But it is time that I should bethink me of St. Austin's prayer, *libera me a meipso*, if I would arrive at the matter in hand.

Moreover, I had yet another reason for taking up the pen myself. I am informed that "The Atlantic Monthly" is mainly indebted for its success to the contributions and editorial supervision of Dr. Holmes, whose excellent "Annals of America" occupy an honored place upon my shelves. The journal itself I have never seen; but if this be so, it might seem that the recommendation of a brother-clergyman (though *par magis quam similis*) should carry a greater weight. I suppose that you have a department for historical lucubrations, and should be glad, if deemed desirable, to forward for publication my "Collections for the Antiquities of Jaalam," and my (now happily complete) pedigree of the Wilbur family from its *fons et origo*, the Wild Boar of Ardennes. Withdrawn from the active duties of my profession by the settlement of a colleague-pastor, the Reverend Jeduthun Hitchcock, formerly of Brutus Four-Corners, I might find time for further contributions to general literature on similar topics. I have made large advances towards a completer genealogy of Mrs. Wilbur's family, the Pilcoxes, not, if I know myself, from any idle vanity, but with the sole desire of rendering myself useful in my

day and generation. *Nulla dies sine lineâ.* I inclose a meteorological register, a list of the births, deaths, and marriages, and a few *memorabilia* of longevity in Jaalam East Parish for the last half-century. Though spared to the unusual period of more than eighty years, I find no diminution of my faculties or abatement of my natural vigor, except a scarcely sensible decay of memory and a necessity of recurring to younger eyesight or spectacles for the finer print in Cruden. It would gratify me to make some further provision for declining years from the emoluments of my literary labors. I had intended to effect an insurance on my life, but was deterred therefrom by a circular from one of the offices, in which the sudden death of so large a proportion of the insured was set forth as an inducement, that it seemed to me little less than a tempting of Providence. *Neque in summâ inopiâ levis esse senectus potest, ne sapienti quidem.*

Thus far concerning Mr. Biglow; and so much seemed needful (*brevis esse laboro*) by way of preliminary, after a silence of fourteen years. He greatly fears lest he may in this essay have fallen below himself, well knowing that, if exercise be dangerous on a full stomach, no less so is writing on a full reputation. Beset as he has been on all sides, he could not refrain, and would only imprecate patience till he shall again have "got the hang" (as he calls it) of an accomplishment long disused. The letter of Mr. Sawin was received some time in last June, and others have followed which will in due season be submitted to the publick. How largely his statements are to be depended on, I more than merely dubitate. He was always distinguished for a tendency to exaggeration, — it might almost be qualified by a stronger term. *Fortiter mentire, aliquid hæret*, seemed to be his favorite rule of rhetoric. That he is actually where he says he is the postmark would seem to confirm; that he was received with the publick demonstrations he describes would appear consonant with what we know of the habits of those regions; but further than this I venture not to decide. I have sometimes suspected a vein of humor in him which leads him to speak by contraries; but since, in the unrestrained intercourse of private life, I have never observed in him any striking powers of invention, I am the more

willing to put a certain qualified faith in the incidents and the details of life and manners which give to his narratives some portion of the interest and entertainment which characterizes a Century Sermon.

It may be expected of me that I should say something to justify myself with the world for a seeming inconsistency with my well-known principles in allowing my youngest son to raise a company for the war, a fact known to all through the medium of the publick prints. I did reason with the young man, but *expellas naturam furcâ, tamen usque recurrit*. Having myself been a chaplain in 1812, I could the less wonder that a man of war had sprung from my loins. It was, indeed, grievous to send my Benjamin, the child of my old age; but after the discomfiture of Manassas, I with my own hands did buckle on his armor, trusting in the great Comforter and Commander for strength according to my need. For truly the memory of a brave son dead in his shroud were a greater staff of my declining years than a living coward (if those may be said to have lived who carry all of themselves into the grave with them), though his days might be long in the land, and he should get much goods. It is not till our earthen vessels are broken that we find and truly possess the treasure that was laid up in them. *Migravi in animam meam*, I have sought refuge in my own soul; nor would I be shamed by the heathen comedian with his *Nequam illud verbum, bene vult, nisi bene facit*. During our dark days, I read constantly in the inspired book of Job, which I believe to contain more food to maintain the fibre of the soul for right living and high thinking than all pagan literature together, though I would by no means vilipend the study of the classicks. There I read that Job said in his despair, even as the fool saith in his heart there is no God, — "The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure." (Job xii. 6.) But I sought farther till I found this Scripture also, which I would have those perpend who have striven to turn our Israel aside to the worship of strange gods: "If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant when they contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer



him?" (Job xxxi. 13, 14.) On this text I preached a discourse on the last day of Fasting and Humiliation with general acceptance, though there were not wanting one or two Laodiceans who said that I should have waited till the President announced his policy. But let us hope and pray, remembering this of Saint Gregory, *Vult Deus rogari, vult cogi, vult quâdam importunitate vinci.*

We had our first fall of snow on Friday last. Frosts have been unusually backward this fall. A singular circumstance occurred in this town on the 20th October, in the family of Deacon Pelatiah Tinkham. On the previous evening, a few moments before family prayers,

[The editors of the "Atlantic" find it necessary here to cut short the letter of their valued correspondent, which seemed calculated rather on the rates of longevity in Jaalam than for less favored localities. They have every encouragement to hope that he will write again.]

With esteem and respect,  
Your obedient servant,  
HOMER WILBUR, A. M.

It's some consid'ble of a spell sence I  
hain't writ no letters,  
An' ther' 's gret changes hez took place in  
all polit'cle metters;  
Some canderdates air dead an' gone, an'  
some hez ben defeated,  
Which 'mounts to pooty much the same;  
fer it's ben proved repeated  
A betch o' bread thet hain't riz once ain't  
goin' to rise agin,  
An' it's jest money throwed away to put  
the emptins in:  
But thet's wut folks wun't never larn;  
they dunno how to go,  
Arter you want their room, no more 'n a  
bullet-headed bean;  
Ther' 's ollers chaps a-hangin' roun' thet  
can't see peatime's past,  
Mis'ble as roosters in a rain, heads down  
an' tails half-mast:  
It ain't disgraceful bein' beat, when a holl  
nation doos it,  
But Chance is like an amberill, — it don't  
take twice to lose it.  
I spose you're kin' o' cur'ous, now, to know  
why I hain't writ.

Wal, I've ben where a litt'ry taste don't  
somehow seem to git  
Th' encouragement a feller'd think, thet 's  
used to public schools,  
An' where sech things ez paper 'n' ink air  
clean agin the rules:  
A kind o' vicyvarsy house, built dreffle  
strong an' stout,  
So s't honest people can't get in, ner  
t' other sort git out,  
An' with the winders so contrived, you'd  
prob'ly like the view  
Better alookin' in than out, though it seems  
sing'lar, tu;  
But then the landlord sets by ye, can't bear  
ye out o' sight,  
And locks ye up ez reg'lar ez an outside  
door at night.

This world is awfle contrary: the rope may  
stretch your neck  
Thet mebbey kep' another chap frum washin'  
off a wreck;  
An' you may see the taters grow in one poor  
feller's patch,  
So small no self-respectin' hen thet vallied  
time 'ould scratch,  
So small the rot can't find 'em out, an' then  
agin, nex' door,  
Ez big ez wut hogs dream on when they're  
'most too fat to snore.  
But groutin' ain't no kin' o' use; an' ef the  
fust throw fails,  
Why, up an' try agin, thet's all, — the cop-  
pers ain't all tails,  
Though I hev seen 'em when I thought they  
hed n't no more head  
Than 'd sarve a nussin' Brigadier thet gits  
some ink to shed.

When I writ last, I 'd ben turned loose by  
thet blamed nigger, Pomp,  
Ferlornor than a musquash, ef you 'd took  
an' dreened his swamp:  
But I ain't o' the meechin' kind, thet sets  
an' thinks fer weeks  
The bottom 's out o' th' univarse coz their  
own gillpot leaks.  
I hed to cross bayous an' criks, (wal, it did  
beat all natur')  
Upon a kin' o' corderoy, fust log, then  
alligator;  
Luck'ly, the critters warn't sharp-sot; I  
guess 't wuz overruled

They 'd done their mornin's marketin' an'  
 gut their hunger cooled;  
 Fer missionaries to the Creeks an' runaways  
 are viewed  
 By them an' folks ez sent express to be  
 their reg'lar food;  
 Wutever 't wuz, they laid an' snoozed ez  
 peacefully ez sinners,  
 Meek ez digestin' deacons be at ordination  
 dinners;  
 Ef any on 'em turned an' snapped, I let 'em  
 kin' o' taste  
 My live-oak leg, an' so, ye see, ther' warn't  
 no gret o' waste;  
 Fer they found out in quicker time than ef  
 they 'd ben to college  
 'T warn't heartier food then though 't wuz  
 made out o' the tree o' knowledge.  
 But I tell you my other leg hed larned wut  
 pizon-nettle meant,  
 An' var'ous other usefle things, afore I  
 reached a settlement,  
 An' all o' me thet wuz n't sore an' sendin'  
 prickles thru me  
 Wuz jest the leg I parted with in lickin'  
 Montezumy:  
 A useful limb it's ben to me, an' more of a  
 support  
 Than wut the other hez ben, — coz I dror  
 my pension for 't.  
 Wal, I gut in at last where folks wuz civer-  
 lized an' white,  
 Ez I diskivered to my cost afore 't warn't  
 hardly night;  
 Fer 'z I wuz settin' in the bar a-takin' sun-  
 thin' hot,  
 An' feelin' like a man agin, all over in one  
 spot,  
 A feller thet sot oppersite, arter a squint at  
 me,  
 Lep' up an' drewed his peacemaker, an',  
 "Dash it, Sir," suz he,  
 "I'm doubledashed ef you ain't him thet  
 stole my yaller chettle,  
 (You're all the stränger thet's around,) so  
 now you've gut to settle;  
 It ain't no use to argerfy ner try to cut up  
 frisky,  
 I know ye ez I know the smell of ole chain-  
 lightnin' whiskey;  
 We're lor-abidin' folks down here, we'll fix  
 ye so 's 't a bar  
 Would n' tech ye with a ten-foot pole;  
 (Jedge, you jest warm the tar);

You'll think you'd better ha' gut among  
 a tribe o' Mongrel Tartars,  
 'fore we've done showin' how we raise our  
 Southun prize tar-martyrs;  
 A moultin' fallen cherubim, ef he should  
 see ye, 'd snicker,  
 Thinkin' he warn't a suckemstance. Come,  
 genlemun, le' 's liquor;  
 An', Gin'ral, when you've mixed the drinks  
 an' chalked 'em up, tote roun'  
 An' see ef ther' 's a feather-bed (thet 's  
 borryable) in town.  
 We'll try ye fair, ole Grafted-Leg, an' ef  
 the tar wun't stick,  
 Th' ain't not a juror here but wut 'll 'quit  
 ye double-quick."  
 To cut it short, I wun't say sweet, they gi'  
 me a good dip,  
 (They ain't *perfessin'* Bahptists here,) then  
 give the bed a rip, —  
 The jury 'd sot, an' quicker thin a flash  
 they hetched me out, a livin'  
 Extemp'ry mammoth turkey-chick fer a  
 Fejee Thanksgivin'.  
 Thet I felt some stuck up is wut it's  
 nat'ral to suppose,  
 When poppylar enthusiasm hed funnished  
 me sech clo'es;  
 (Ner 't ain't without edvantiges, this kin'  
 o' suit, ye see,  
 It's water-proof, an' water's wut I like  
 kep' out o' me;)  
 But nut content with thet, they took a ker-  
 ridge from the fence  
 An' rid me roun' to see the place, entirely  
 free 'f expense,  
 With forty-leven new kines o' sarse with-  
 out no charge acquainted me,  
 Gi' me three cheers, an' vowed thet I wuz  
 all their fahney painted me;  
 They treated me to all their eggs; (they  
 kept 'em I should think,  
 Fer sech ovations, pooty long, for they  
 wuz mos' distinc';)  
 They starred me thick 'z the Milky-Way  
 with indiscrim'nit cherity,  
 Fer wut we call reception eggs air sunthin'  
 of a rerity;  
 Green ones is plentife anough, skurce wuth  
 a nigger's getherin',  
 But your dead-ripe ones ranges high fer  
 treatin' Nothun bretherin;  
 A spotteder, ring streakeder child thet  
 warn't in Uncle Sam's

Holl farm, — a cross of stripēd pig an' one  
o' Jacob's lambs;  
'T wuz Dannil in the lions' den, new an'  
enlarged edition,  
An' everythin' fust-rate o' 'ts kind; the'  
warn't no impersition.  
People 's impulsiver down here than wut  
our folks to home be,  
An' kin' o' go it 'ith a resh in raisin' Hail  
Columby:  
Thet 's so: an' they swarmed out like bees,  
for your real Southun men's  
Time is n't o' much more account than an  
ole settin' hen's;  
(They jest work semioccashnally, or else  
don't work at all,  
An' so their time an' 'tention both air at  
sac'ity's call.)  
Talk about hospatality! wut Nothun  
town d' ye know  
Would take a totle stranger up an' treat  
him gratis so?  
You'd better b'lieve ther' 's nothin' like  
this spendin' days an' nights  
Along 'ith a different race fer civerlizin'  
whites.  
But this wuz all prelim'nary; it's so Gran'  
Jurors here  
Fin' a true bill, a hendier way than ourn,  
an' nut so dear;  
So arter this they sentenced me, to make  
all tight 'n' snug,  
Afore a reg'lar court o' law, to ten years  
in the Jug.  
I did n't make no gret defence: you don't  
feel much like speakin',  
When, ef you let your clamshells gape, a  
quart o' tar will leak in:  
I hev hearn tell o' wingēd words, but pint  
o' fact it tethers  
The spoutin' gift to hev your words *tu* thick  
sot on with feathers,  
An' Choate ner Webster would n't ha'  
made an A 1 kin' o' speech  
Astride a Southun chestnut horse sharper  
'n a baby's screech.  
Two year ago they ketched the thief, 'n'  
seen' I wuz innercent,  
They jest uncorked an' le' me run, an' in  
my stid the sinner sent  
To see how *he* liked pork 'n' pone flavored  
with wa'nut saplin',  
An' nary social priv'ledge but a one-hoss,  
starn-wheel chaplin.

When I come out, the folks behaved mos'  
gen'manly an' harnsome;  
They 'lowed it would n't be more 'n right,  
ef I should cuss 'n' darn some:  
The Cunnle he apolergized; suz he, "I'll  
du wut's right,  
I'll give ye settisfeccion now by shootin'  
ye at sight,  
An' give the nigger (when he 's caught), to  
pay him fer his trickin'  
In gittin' the wrong man took up, a most  
H fired lickin', —  
It 's jest the way with all on 'em, the in-  
consistent critters,  
They 're 'most enough to make a man blas-  
pheme his mornin' bitters;  
I'll be your frien' thru thick an' thin an'  
in all kines o' weathers,  
An' all you'll hev to pay fer 's jest the  
waste o' tar an' feathers:  
A lady owned the bed, ye see, a widder, tu,  
Miss Shennon;  
It wuz her mite; we would ha' took another,  
ef ther' d ben one:  
We don't make *no* charge for the ride an'  
all the other fixins.  
Le' 's liquor; Gin'ral, you can chalk our  
friend for all the mixins."  
A meetin' then wuz called, where they  
"RESOLVED, Thet we respec'  
B. S. Esquire for quallerties o' heart an'  
intellec'  
Peculiar to Columby's sile, an' not to no  
one else's,  
Thet makes Eurōpean tyrans scringe in all  
their gilded pel'ces,  
An' doos gret honor to our race an'  
Southun institootions: "  
(I give ye jest the substance o' the leadin'  
resolootions:)  
"RESOLVED, Thet we revere in him a  
soger 'thout a flor,  
A martyr to the princerples o' libbaty an'  
lor:  
RESOLVED, Thet other nations all, ef sot  
'longside o' us,  
For vartoo, larnin', chivverlry, ain't noways  
wuth a cuss."  
They gut up a subscription, tu, but no gret  
come o' *thet*;  
I 'xpect in cairin' of it roun' they took a  
leaky hat;  
Though Southun genelmun ain't slow at  
puttin' down their name,

(When they can write,) fer in the eend it comes to jes' the same,  
 Because, ye see, 't 's the fashion here to sign an' not to think  
 A critter 'd be so sordid ez to ax 'em for the chink:  
 I did n't call but jest on one, an' *he* drawed tooth-pick on me,  
 An' reckoned he warn't goin' to stan' no sech dog-gauned econ'my;  
 So nothin' more wuz realized, 'ceptin' the good-will shown,  
 Than ef 't had ben from fust to last a regular Cotton Loan.  
 It's a good way, though, come to think, coz ye enjy the sense  
 O' lendin' lib'rally to the Lord, an' nary red o' 'xpense:  
 Sence then I've gut my name up for a gin'rous-hearted man  
 By jes' subscribin' right an' left on this high-minded plan;  
 I've gin away my thousands so to every Southun sort  
 O' missions, colleges, an' sech, ner ain't no poorer for 't.  
 I warn't so bad off, arter all; I need n't hardly mention  
 That Guv'ment owed me quite a pile for my arrears o' pension,—  
 I mean the poor, weak thing we *hed*: we run a new one now,  
 Thet strings a feller with a claim up ta the nighes' bough,  
 An' *prectises* the right o' man, purtects down-trodden debtors,  
 Ner wun't hev creditors about ascerougin' o' their betters:  
 Jeff's gut the last idees ther' is, poscrip', fourteenth edition,  
 He knows it takes some enterprise to run an oppersition;  
 Ourn 's the fust thru-by-daylight train, with all ou'doors for deepot;  
 Yourn goes so slow you'd think 't wuz drawed by a las' cent'ry teapot;—  
 Wal, I gut all on 't paid in gold afore our State seceded,  
 An' done wal, for Confed'rit bonds warn't jest the cheese I needed:  
 Nut but wut they're ez *good* ez gold, but then it's hard a-breakin' on 'em,  
 An' ignorant folks is ollers sot an' wun't git used to takin' on 'em;

They 're wuth ez much ez wut they wuz afore ole Mem'ngr signed 'em,  
 An' go off middlin' wal for drinks, when ther' 's a knife behind 'em;  
 We *du* miss silver, jes' fer thet an' ridin' in a bus,  
 Now we've shook off the desputs thet wuz suckin' at our pus;  
 An' it's *because* the South's so rich; 't wuz nat'ral to expec'  
 Supplies o' change wuz jes' the things we should n't recollect;  
 We'd ough' to ha' thought aforehan', though, o' thet good rule o' Crockett's,  
 For 't 's tiresome cairin' cotton-bales an' niggers in your pockets,  
 Ner 't ain't quite hendy to pass off one o' your six-foot Guineas  
 An' git your halves an' quarters back in gals an' pickaninnies:  
 Wal, 't ain't quite all a feller 'd ax, but then ther' 's this to say,  
 It's on'y jest among ourselves thet we expec' to pay;  
 Our system would ha' caird us thru in any Bible cent'ry,  
 'fore this onscripterl plan come up o' books by double entry;  
 We go the patriarkle here out o' all sight an' hearin',  
 For Jacob warn't a suckemstance to Jeff at financierin';  
 He never 'd thought o' borryrin' from Esau like all nater  
 An' then cornfiscatin' all debts to sech a small pertater;  
 There 's p'liticlike econ'my, now, combined 'ith morril beauty  
 Thet sayerifices privit eends (your in'my's, tu) to dooty!  
 Wy, Jeff 'd ha' gin him five an' won his eye-teeth 'fore he knowed it,  
 An', stid o' wastin' pottage, he 'd ha' eat it up an' owed it.  
 But I wuz goin' on to say how I come here to dwell;—  
 'Nough said, thet, arter lookin' roun', I liked the place so wal,  
 Where niggers doos a double good, with us atop to stiddy 'em,  
 By bein' proofs o' prophecy an' suckleatin' medium,  
 Where a man's sunthin' coz he 's white, an' whiskey 's cheap ez fleas,



An' the financial pollercy jes' sooted my  
 idees,  
 Thet I friz down right where I wuz, mer-  
 rided the Widder Shennon,  
 (Her thirds wuz part in cotton-land, part  
 in the curse o' Canaan,)  
 An' here I be ez lively ez a chipmunk on a  
 wall,  
 With nothin' to feel riled about much later  
 'n Eddam's fall.

Ez fur ez human foresight goes, we made  
 an even trade:  
 She gut an overseer, an' I a fem'ly ready-  
 made,  
 The youngest on 'em 's 'mos' growed up,  
 rugged an' spry ez weazles,  
 So 's 't ther' 's no resk o' doctors' bills fer  
 hoopin'-cough an' measles.  
 Our farm 's at Turkey-Buzzard Roost,  
 Little Big Boosy River,  
 Wal located in all respex, — fer 't ain't the  
 chills 'n' fever  
 Thet makes my writin' seem to squirm; a  
 Southuner 'd allow I 'd  
 Some call to shake, for I 've jest hed to  
 meller a new cowhide.  
 Miss S. is all 'f a lady; th' ain't no better on  
 Big Boosy  
 Ner one with more accomplishmunt 'twixt  
 here an' Tuscaloosy;  
 She 's an F. F., the tallest kind, an' prouder  
 'n the Gran' Turk,  
 An' never hed a relative thet done a stroke  
 o' work;  
 Hern ain't a scrimpin' fem'ly sech ez *you*  
 git up Down East,  
 Th' ain't a growed member on 't but owes  
 his thousuns et the least:  
 She *is* some old; but then agin ther' 's draw-  
 backs in my sheer:  
 Wut 's left o' me ain't more 'n enough to  
 make a Brigadier:  
 Wust is, thet she hez tantrums; she 's like  
 Seth Moody's gun  
 (Him thet wuz nicknamed frum his limp  
 Ole Dot an' Kerry One);  
 He 'd left her loaded up a spell, an' hed to  
 git her clear,  
 So he onbitched, — Jeerusalem! the middle  
 o' last year  
 Wuz right nex' door compared to where she  
 kicked the critter tu  
 (Though *jest* where he brought up wuz wut  
 no human never knew);

His brother Asaph picked her up an' tied  
 her to a tree,  
 An' then she kicked an hour 'n' a half afore  
 she 'd let it be:  
 Wal, Miss S. *doos* hev cuttins-up an' pourins-  
 out o' vials,  
 But then she hez her widder's thirds, an'  
 all on us hez trials.  
 My objec', though, in writin' now warn't to  
 allude to sech,  
 But to another suckemstance more dellykit  
 to tech, —  
 I want thet you should grad'lly break my  
 merriage to Jerushy,  
 An' there 's a heap of argymunts thet 's  
 emple to indooce ye:  
 Fust place, State's Prison, — wal, it 's true  
 it warn't fer crime, o' course,  
 But then it 's jest the same fer her in gittin'  
 a divorce;  
 Nex' place, my State 's secedin' out hez  
 leg'lly lef' me free  
 To merry any one I please, pervidin' it 's a  
 she;  
 Fin'lly, I never wun't come back, she need  
 n't hev no fear on 't,  
 But then it 's wal to fix things might fer  
 fear Miss S. should hear on 't;  
 Lastly, I 've gut religion South, an' Rushy  
 she 's a pagan  
 Thet sets by th' graven imiges o' the gret  
 Nothun Dagon;  
 (Now I hain't seen one in six munts, for,  
 sence our Treashry Loan,  
 Though yaller boys is thick enough, eagles  
 hez kind o' flown;)  
 An' ef J wants a stronger pint than them  
 thet I hev stated,  
 Wy, she 's an aliun in my now, an' I 've  
 been cornfiscated, —  
 For sence we 've entered on th' estate o'  
 the late nayshnul eagle,  
 She hain't no kin' o' right but jes' wut I  
 allow ez legle:  
 Wut *doos* Secedin' mean, ef 't ain't thet  
 nat'ul rights hez riz, 'n'  
 Thet wut is mine 's my own, but wut 's  
 another man's ain't his'n?

Besides, I could n't do no else; Miss S. suz  
 she to me,  
 "You 've sheered my bed," [thet 's when I  
 paid my interduction fee  
 To Southun rites,] "an' kep' your sheer,"  
 [wal, I allow it sticked

So 's 't I wuz most six weeks in jail afore I  
 got me picked,]  
 "Ner never paid no demmiges; but thet  
 wun't do no harm,  
 Pervidin' thet you 'll undertake to oversee  
 the farm:  
 (My eldes' boy he 's so took up, wut with  
 the Ringtail Rangers  
 An' settin' in the Jestic-Court for welcomin'  
 o' strangers;")  
 [He sot on *me*;] "an' so, ef you 'll jest on-  
 dertake the care  
 Upon a mod'rit sellery, we 'll up an' call it  
 square;  
 But ef you *can't* conclude," suz she, an' give  
 a kin' o' grin,  
 "Wy, the Gran' Jurymen, I 'xpect, 'll hev  
 to set agin,"  
 That 's the way metters stood at fust; now  
 wut wuz I to du,  
 But jes' to make the best on 't an' off coat  
 an' buckle tu?  
 Ther' ain't a livin' man thet finds an income  
 necessarier  
 Than me,— bimeby I 'll tell ye how I  
 fin'ly come to merry her.

She hed another motive, tu: I mention of it  
 here

T' encourage lads thet 's growin' up to  
 study 'n' persevere,  
 An' show 'em how much better 't pays to  
 mind their winter-schoolin'  
 Than to go off on benders 'n' sech, an' waste  
 their time in foolin';  
 Ef 't warn't for studyin' evenins, why, I  
 never 'd ha' ben here  
 A orn'ment o' sociaty, in my appropriut  
 spear:  
 She wanted somebody, ye see, o' taste an'  
 cultivation,  
 To talk along o' preachers when they stopt  
 to the plantation;  
 For folks in Dixie th't read an' rite, onless  
 it is by jarks,  
 Is skurce ez wut they wuz among th' ori-  
 genle patriarchs;  
 To fit a feller f' wut they call the soshle  
 higherarchy,  
 All thet you 've gut to know is jes' beyond  
 an evrage darky;  
 Schoolin' 's wut they can't seem to stan',  
 they're tu consarned high-pressure,  
 An' knowin' t' much might spile a boy for  
 bein' a Secesher.

We hain't no settled preachin' here, ner  
 ministeril taxes;  
 The min'ster's only settlement 's the carpet-  
 bag he packs his  
 Razor an' soap-brush intu, with his hym-  
 book an' his Bible,—  
 But they *du* preach, I swan to man, it 's  
 puf'kly indescrible!  
 They go it like an Ericsson's ten-hoss-  
 power coleric ingine,  
 An' make Ole Split-Foot winch an' squirm,  
 for all he 's used to singein';  
 Hawkins's whetstone ain't a pinch o' primin'  
 to the innards  
 To hearin' on 'em put free grace t' a lot o'  
 tough old sinhards!  
 But I must eend this letter now: 'fore long  
 I 'll send a fresh un;  
 I 've lots o' things to write about, pertick-  
 lerly Seceshun:  
 I 'm called off now to mission-work, to let  
 a leetle law in  
 To Cynthy's hide: an' so, till death,  
 Yourn,

BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN.

No. II

MASON AND SLIDELL:  
 A YANKEE IDYLL

TO THE EDITORS OF THE ATLANTIC  
 MONTHLY

JAALAM, 6th Jan., 1862.

GENTLEMEN,— I was highly gratified by  
 the insertion of a portion of my letter in the  
 last number of your valuable and entertain-  
 ing Miscellany, though in a type which  
 rendered its substance inaccessible even to  
 the beautiful new spectacles presented to  
 me by a Committee of the Parish on New  
 Year's Day. I trust that I was able to bear  
 your very considerable abridgment of my  
 lucubrations with a spirit becoming a Chris-  
 tian. My third granddaughter, Rebekah,  
 aged fourteen years, and whom I have  
 trained to read slowly and with proper em-  
 phasis (a practice too much neglected in  
 our modern systems of education), read  
 aloud to me the excellent essay upon "Old  
 Age," the author of which I cannot help  
 suspecting to be a young man who has

never yet known what it was to have snow (*canities morosa*) upon his own roof. *Dissolve frigus, large super foco ligna reponens*, is a rule for the young, whose wood-pile is yet abundant for such cheerful lenitives. A good life behind him is the best thing to keep an old man's shoulders from shivering at every breath of sorrow or ill-fortune. But methinks it were easier for an old man to feel the disadvantages of youth than the advantages of age. Of these latter I reckon one of the chiefest to be this: that we attach a less inordinate value to our own productions, and, distrusting daily more and more our own wisdom (with the conceit whereof at twenty we wrap ourselves away from knowledge as with a garment), do reconcile ourselves with the wisdom of God. I could have wished, indeed, that room might have been made for the residue of the anecdote relating to Deacon Tinkham, which would not only have gratified a natural curiosity on the part of the publick (as I have reason to know from several letters of inquiry already received), but would also, as I think, have largely increased the circulation of your Magazine in this town. *Nihil humani alienum*, there is a curiosity about the affairs of our neighbors which is not only pardonable, but even commendable. But I shall abide a more fitting season.

As touching the following literary effort of Esquire Biglow, much might be profitably said on the topik of Idyllick and Pastoral Poetry, and concerning the proper distinctions to be made between them, from Theocritus, the inventor of the former, to Collins, the latest authour I know of who has emulated the classicks in the latter style. But in the time of a Civil War worthy a Milton to defend and a Lucan to sing, it may be reasonably doubted whether the publick, never too studious of serious instruction, might not consider other objects more deserving of present attention. Concerning the title of Idyll, which Mr. Biglow has adopted at my suggestion, it may not be improper to animadvert, that the name properly signifies a poem somewhat rustick in phrase (for, though the learned are not agreed as to the particular dialect employed by Theocritus, they are unversanimous both as to its rustieity and its capacity of rising now and then to the level of more elevated

sentiments and expressions), while it is also descriptive of real scenery and manners. Yet it must be admitted that the production now in question (which here and there bears perhaps too plainly the marks of my correcting hand) does partake of the nature of a Pastoral, inasmuch as the interlocutors therein are purely imaginary beings, and the whole is little better than *καπνοῦ σκιὰς ὄναρ*. The plot was, as I believe, suggested by the "Twa Briggs" of Robert Burns, a Scottish poet of the last century, as that found its prototype in the "Mutual Complaint of Plainstanes and Causey" by Fergusson, though the metre of this latter be different by a foot in each verse. Perhaps the Two Dogs of Cervantes gave the first hint. I reminded my talented young parishioner and friend that Concord Bridge had long since yielded to the edacious tooth of Time. But he answered me to this effect: that there was no greater mistake of an authour than to suppose the reader had no fancy of his own; that, if once that faculty was to be called into activity, it were *better* to be in for the whole sheep than the shoulder; and that he knew Concord like a book, — an expression questionable in propriety, since there are few things with which he is not more familiar than with the printed page. In proof of what he affirmed, he showed me some verses which with others he had stricken out as too much delaying the action, but which I communicate in this place because they rightly define "punkin-seed" (which Mr. Bartlett would have a kind of perch, — a creature to which I have found a rod or pole not to be so easily equivalent in our inland waters as in the books of arithmetic), and because it conveys an eulogium on the worthy son of an excellent father, with whose acquaintance (*eheu, fugaces anni!*) I was formerly honoured.

"But nowadays the Bridge ain't wut they show,  
So much ez Em'son, Hawthorne, an' Thoreau.  
I know the village, though; was sent there once  
A-schoolin', 'cause to home I played the dunce;  
An' I've ben sence a visitin' the Jedge,  
Whose garding whispers with the river's edge,  
Where I've sot mornin's lazy as the bream,  
Whose on'y business is to head up-stream,  
(We call 'em punkin-seed,) or else in chat  
Along 'th the Jedge, who covers with his hat  
More wit an' gumption an' shrewd Yankee sense  
Than there is mosses on an ole stone fence."

Concerning the subject-matter of the verses, I have not the leisure at present to write so fully as I could wish, my time being occupied with the preparation of a discourse for the forthcoming bicentenary celebration of the first settlement of Jaalam East Parish. It may gratify the public interest to mention the circumstance, that my investigations to this end have enabled me to verify the fact (of much historical importance, and hitherto hotly debated) that Shearjashub Tarbox was the first child of white parentage born in this town, being named in his father's will under date August 7th, or 9th, 1662. It is well known that those who advocate the claims of Mehetable Goings are unable to find any trace of her existence prior to October of that year. As respects the settlement of the Mason and Slidell question, Mr. Biglow has not incorrectly stated the popular sentiment, so far as I can judge by its expression in this locality. For myself, I feel more sorrow than resentment: for I am old enough to have heard those talk of England who still, even after the unhappy estrangement, could not unschool their lips from calling her the Mother-Country. But England has insisted on ripping up old wounds, and has undone the healing work of fifty years; for nations do not reason, they only feel, and the *spretæ injuria formæ* rankles in their minds as bitterly as in that of a woman. And because this is so, I feel the more satisfaction that our Government has acted (as all Governments should, standing as they do between the people and their passions) as if it had arrived at years of discretion. There are three short and simple words, the hardest of all to pronounce in any language (and I suspect they were no easier before the confusion of tongues), but which no man or nation that cannot utter can claim to have arrived at manhood. Those words are, *I was wrong*; and I am proud that, while England played the boy, our rulers had strength enough from the People below and wisdom enough from God above to quit themselves like men.

The sore points on both sides have been skilfully exasperated by interested and unscrupulous persons, who saw in a war between the two countries the only hope of profitable return for their investment in

Confederate stock, whether political or financial. The always supercilious, often insulting, and sometimes even brutal tone of British journals and public men has certainly not tended to soothe whatever resentment might exist in America.

"Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love, But why did you kick me down stairs?"

We have no reason to complain that England, as a necessary consequence of her clubs, has become a great society for the minding of other people's business, and we can smile good-naturedly when she lectures other nations on the sins of arrogance and conceit; but we may justly consider it a breach of the political *covenances* which are expected to regulate the intercourse of one well-bred government with another, when men holding places in the ministry allow themselves to dictate our domestic policy, to instruct us in our duty, and to stigmatize as unholy a war for the rescue of whatever a high-minded people should hold most vital and most sacred. Was it in good taste, that I may use the mildest term, for Earl Russell to expound our own Constitution to President Lincoln, or to make a new and fallacious application of an old phrase for our benefit, and tell us that the Rebels were fighting for independence and we for empire? As if all wars for independence were by nature just and deserving of sympathy, and all wars for empire ignoble and worthy only of reprobation, or as if these easy phrases in any way characterized this terrible struggle, — terrible not so truly in any superficial sense, as from the essential and deadly enmity of the principles that underlie it. His Lordship's bit of borrowed rhetoric would justify Smith O'Brien, Nana Sahib, and the Maori chieftains, while it would condemn nearly every war in which England has ever been engaged. Was it so very presumptuous in us to think that it would be decorous in English statesmen if they spared time enough to acquire some kind of knowledge, though of the most elementary kind, in regard to this country and the questions at issue here, before they pronounced so off-hand a judgment? Or is political information expected to come Dogberry-fashion in England, like reading and writing, by nature?



And now all respectable England is wondering at our irritability, and sees a quite satisfactory explanation of it in our national vanity. *Suave mari magno*, it is pleasant, sitting in the easy-chairs of Downing Street, to sprinkle pepper on the raw wounds of a kindred people struggling for life, and philosophical to find in self-conceit the cause of our instinctive resentment. Surely we were of all nations the least liable to any temptation of vanity at a time when the gravest anxiety and the keenest sorrow were never absent from our hearts. Nor is conceit the exclusive attribute of any one nation. The earliest of English travellers, Sir John Mandeville, took a less provincial view of the matter when he said, "For fro what partie of the erthe that men duellen, other aboven or beneathen, it semethe always to hem that duellen that they gon more righte than any other folke." The English have always had their fair share of this amiable quality. We may say of them still, as the authour of the "Lettres Cabalistiques" said of them more than a century ago, "*Ces derniers disent naturellement qu'il n'y a qu'eux qui soient estimables.*" And, as he also says, "*J'aimerois presque autant tomber entre les mains d'un Inquisiteur que d'un Anglois qui me fait sentir sans cesse combien il s'estime plus que moi, et qui ne daigne me parler que pour injurier ma Nation et pour m'ennuyer du récit des grandes qualités de la sienne.*" Of this Bull we may safely say with Horace, *habet fœnum in cornu*. What we felt to be especially insulting was the quiet assumption that the descendants of men who left the Old World for the sake of principle, and who had made the wilderness into a New World patterned after an Idea, could not possibly be susceptible of a generous or lofty sentiment, could have no feeling of nationality deeper than that of a tradesman for his shop. One would have thought, in listening to England, that we were a nation at all, or had any other principle of union than that of booths at a fair, where there is no higher notion of government than the constable, or better image of God than that stamped upon the current coin.

It is time for Englishmen to consider whether there was nothing in the spirit of their press and of their leading public men

calculated to rouse a just indignation, and to cause a permanent estrangement on the part of any nation capable of self-respect, and sensitively jealous, as ours then was, of foreign interference. Was there nothing in the indecent haste with which belligerent rights were conceded to the Rebels, nothing in the abrupt tone assumed in the Trent case, nothing in the fitting out of Confederate privateers, that might stir the blood of a people already overcharged with doubt, suspicion, and terrible responsibility? The laity in any country do not stop to consider points of law, but they have an instinctive perception of the *animus* that actuates the policy of a foreign nation; and in our own case they remembered that the British authorities in Canada did not wait till diplomacy could send home to England for her slow official tinder-box to fire the "Caroline." Add to this, what every sensible American knew, that the moral support of England was equal to an army of two hundred thousand men to the Rebels, while it insured us another year or two of exhausting war. It was not so much the spite of her words (though the time might have been more tastefully chosen) as the actual power for evil in them that we felt as a deadly wrong. Perhaps the most immediate and efficient cause of mere irritation was the sudden and unaccountable change of manner on the other side of the water. Only six months before, the Prince of Wales had come over to call us cousins; and everywhere it was nothing but "our American brethren," that great offshoot of British institutions in the New World, so almost identical with them in laws, language, and literature, — this last of the alliterative compliments being so bitterly true, that perhaps it will not be retracted even now. To this outburst of long-repressed affection we responded with genuine warmth, if with something of the awkwardness of a poor relation bewildered with the sudden tightening of the ties of consanguinity when it is rumored that he has come into a large estate. Then came the Rebellion, and, *presto!* a flaw in our titles was discovered, the plate we were promised at the family table is flung at our head, and we were again the scum of creation, intolerably vulgar, at once cowardly and overbearing, — no relations of theirs, after all, but a dreggy hy-

brid of the basest bloods of Europe. Panurge was not quicker to see that John his former friend. I cannot help thinking of Walter Mapes's jingling paraphrase of Petronius, —

"Dummodo sim splendidis vestibus ornatus,  
Et multa familia sim circumvallatus,  
Prudens sum et sapiens et morigeratus,  
Et tuus nepos sum et tu meus cognatus," —

which I may freely render thus: —

So long as I may be prosperous, I 'd dinners by the dozen,  
Was well-bred, witty, virtuous, and everybody's cousin;  
If luck should turn, as well she may, her fancy is so flexible,  
Will virtue, cousinship, and all return with her from exile?

There was nothing in all this to exasperate a philosopher, much to make him smile rather; but the earth's surface is not chiefly inhabited by philosophers, and I revive the recollection of it now in perfect good-humour, merely by way of suggesting to our *ci-devant* British cousins, that it would have been easier for them to hold their tongues than for us to keep our tempers under the circumstances.

The English Cabinet made a blunder, unquestionably, in taking it so hastily for granted that the United States had fallen forever from their position as a first-rate power, and it was natural that they should vent a little of their vexation on the people whose inexplicable obstinacy in maintaining freedom and order, and in resisting degradation, was likely to convict them of their mistake. But if bearing a grudge be the sure mark of a small mind in the individual, can it be a proof of high spirit in a nation? If the result of the present estrangement between the two countries shall be to make us more independent of British twaddle (*Indomito nec dira ferens stipendia Tauro*), so much the better; but if it is to make us insensible to the value of British opinion in matters where it gives us the judgment of an impartial and cultivated outsider, if we are to shut ourselves out from the advantages of English culture, the loss will be ours, and not theirs. Because the door of the old homestead has been once slammed in our faces, shall we in a huff reject all future advances of conciliation, and cut ourselves foolishly off from any share in the human-

izing influences of the place, with its ineffable riches of association, its heirlooms of immemorial culture, its historic monuments, ours no less than theirs, its noble gallery of ancestral portraits? We have only to succeed, and England will not only respect, but, for the first time, begin to understand us. And let us not, in our justifiable indignation at wanton insult, forget that England is not the England only of snobs who dread the democracy they do not comprehend, but the England of history, of heroes, statesmen, and poets, whose names are dear, and their influence as salutary to us as to her.

Let us strengthen the hands of those in authority over us, and curb our own tongues, remembering that General Wait commonly proves in the end more than a match for General Headlong, and that the Good Book ascribes safety to a multitude, indeed, but not to a mob, of counsellours. Let us remember and perpend the words of Paulus Emilius to the people of Rome; that, "if they judged they could manage the war to more advantage by any other, he would willingly yield up his charge; but if they confided in him, *they were not to make themselves his colleagues in his office, or raise reports, or criticise his actions, but, without talking, supply him with means and assistance necessary to the carrying on of the war; for, if they proposed to command their own commander, they would render this expedition more ridiculous than the former.*" (*Vide Plutarchum in Vitâ P. E.*) Let us also not forget what the same excellent authour says concerning Perseus's fear of spending money, and not permit the covetousness of Brother Jonathan to be the good fortune of Jefferson Davis. For my own part, till I am ready to admit the Commander-in-Chief to my pulpit, I shall abstain from planning his battles. If courage be the sword, yet is patience the armour of a nation; and in our desire for peace, let us never be willing to surrender the Constitution bequeathed us by fathers at least as wise as ourselves (even with Jefferson Davis to help us), and, with those degenerate Romans, *tuta et præsentia quam vetera et periculosa malle.*

And not only should we bridle our own tongues, but the pens of others, which are swift to convey useful intelligence to the

enemy. This is no new inconvenience ; for, under date, 3d June, 1745, General Pepperell wrote thus to Governor Shirley from Louisbourg : " What your Excellency observes of the *army's being made acquainted with any plans proposed, until ready to be put in execution*, has always been disagreeable to me, and I have given many cautions relating to it. But when your Excellency considers that *our Council of War consists of more than twenty members*, I am persuaded you will think it *impossible for me to hinder it*, if any of them will persist in communicating to inferior officers and soldiers what ought to be kept secret. I am informed that the Boston newspapers are filled with paragraphs from private letters relating to the expedition. Will your Excellency permit me to say I think it may be of ill consequence ? Would it not be convenient, if your Excellency should forbid the Printers' inserting such news ? " Verily, if *tempora mutantur*, we may question the *et nos mutamur in illis* ; and if tongues be leaky, it will need all hands at the pumps to save the Ship of State. Our history dotes and repeats itself. If Sassycus (rather than Alcibiades) find a parallel in Beauregard, so Weakwash, as he is called by the brave Lieutenant Lion Gardiner, need not seek far among our own Sachems for his anti-type.

With respect,

Your ob' humble servt',

HOMER WILBUR, A. M.

I LOVE to start out arter night's begun,  
An' all the chores about the farm are done,  
The critters milked an' foddered, gates  
shet fast,  
Tools cleaned aginst to-morrer, supper  
past,  
An' Nancy darnin' by her ker'sene lamp, —  
I love, I say, to start upon a tramp,  
To shake the kinkles out o' back an' legs,  
An' kind o' rack my life off from the dregs  
Thet's apt to settle in the buttery-hutch  
Of folks thet foller in one rut too much :  
Hard work is good an' wholesome, past all  
doubt ;  
But 't ain't so, ef the mind gits tuckered  
out.  
Now, bein' born in Middlesex, you know,  
There's certin spots where I like best to  
go :

The Concord road, for instance (I, for  
one,  
Most gin'ly ollers call it *John Bull's Run*),  
The field o' Lexin'ton where England tried  
The fastest colours thet she ever dyed,  
An' Concord Bridge, thet Davis, when he  
came,  
Found was the bee-line track to heaven an'  
fame,  
Ez all roads be by natur', ef your soul  
Don't sneak thru shun-pikes so's to save  
the toll.

They're 'most too fur away, take too much  
time  
To visit o'fen, ef it ain't in rhyme ;  
But the 's a walk thet 's hendier, a sight,  
An' suits me fust-rate of a winter's night, —  
I mean the round whale's-back o' Prospect  
Hill.

I love to l'iter there while night grows  
still,

An' in the twinklin' villages about,  
Fust here, then there, the well-saved lights  
goes out,

An' nary sound but watch-dogs' false  
alarms,

Or muffled cock-crows from the drowsy  
farms,

Where some wise rooster (men act jest  
thet way)

Stands to 't thet moon-rise is the break o'  
day :

(So Mister Seward sticks a three-months'  
pin

Where the war'd oughto eend, then tries  
agin ;

My gran'ther's rule was safer'n 'tis to  
crow :

*Don't never prophesy — unless ye know.*)

I love to muse there till it kind o' seems  
Ez ef the world went eddyin' off in dreams ;  
The northwest wind thet twitches at my  
baird

Blows out o' sturdier days not easy scared,  
An' the same moon thet this December  
shines

Starts out the tents an' booths o' Putnam's  
lines ;

The rail-fence posts, acrost the hill thet  
runs,

Turn ghosts o' sogers should'rin' ghosts o'  
guns ;

Ez wheels the sentry, glints a flash o' light,  
Along the firelock won at Concord Fight,

An', 'twixt the silences, now fur, now nigh,  
Rings the sharp challenge, hums the low  
reply.

Ez I was settin' so, it warn't long sence,  
Mixin' the puffict with the present tense,  
I heerd two voices som'ers in the air,  
Though, ef I was to die, I can't tell where:  
Voices I call 'em: 't was a kind o' sough  
Like pine-trees thet the wind's ageth'rin'  
through;

An', fact, I thought it *was* the wind a spell,  
Then some misdoubted, could n't fairly tell,  
Fust sure, then not, jest as you hold an eel,  
I knowed, an' did n't, — fin'lly seemed to  
feel

'T was Concord Bridge a talkin' off to kill  
With the Stone Spike thet 's druv thru  
Bunker's Hill;

Whether 't was so, or ef I on'y dreamed,  
I could n't say; I tell it ez it seemed.

#### THE BRIDGE

Wal, neighbor, tell us wut 's turned up  
thet 's new?

You 're younger 'n I be, — nigher Bos-  
ton, tu:

An' down to Boston, ef you take their  
showin',

Wut they don't know, ain't hardly wuth  
the knowin'.

There's *sunthin'* goin' on, I know: las'  
night

The British sogers killed in our gret fight  
(Nigh fifty year they hed n't stirred nor  
spoke)

Made sech a coil you 'd thought a dam hed  
broke:

Why, one he up an' beat a revellee  
With his own crossbones on a holler tree,  
Till all the graveyards swarmed out like a  
hive

With faces I hain't seen sence Seventy-  
five.

Wut *is* the news? 'T ain't good, or they 'd  
be cheerin'.

Speak slow an' clear, for I'm some hard o'  
hearin'.

#### THE MONIMENT

I don't know hardly ef it's good or bad, —

#### THE BRIDGE

At wust, it can't be wus than wut we've  
had.

#### THE MONIMENT

You know them envys thet the Rebbles  
sent,

An' Cap'n Wilkes he borried o' the Trent?

#### THE BRIDGE

Wut! they ha'n't hanged 'em? Then their  
wits is gone!

Thet's the sure way to make a goose a  
swan!

#### THE MONIMENT

No: England she *would* hev 'em, *Fee, Faw,*  
*Fum!*

(Ez though she hed n't fools enough to  
home,)

So they've returned 'em —

#### THE BRIDGE

*Hev* they? Wal, by heaven,  
Thet's the wust news I've heerd sence  
Seventy-seven!

*By George*, I meant to say, though I de-  
clare

It's 'most enough to make a deacon swear.

#### THE MONIMENT

Now don't go off half-cock: folks never  
gains

By usin' pepper-sarse instid o' brains.  
Come, neighbor, you don't understan' —

#### THE BRIDGE

How? Hey?  
Not understan'? Why, wut 's to hender,  
pray?

Must I go huntin' round to find a chap  
To tell me when my face hez hed a slap?

#### THE MONIMENT

See here: the British they found out a  
flaw

In Cap'n Wilkes's readin' o' the law:  
(They *make* all laws, you know, an' so, o'  
course,

It's nateral they should understan' their  
force:)

He 'd oughto ha' took the vessel into port,  
An' hed her sot on by a reg'lar court;  
She was a mail-ship, an' a steamer, tu,  
An' thet, they say, hez changed the pint o'  
view,

Coz the old practice, bein' meant for sails,  
Ef tried upon a steamer, kind o' fails;



You *may* take out despatches, but you  
mus' n't  
Take nary man —

## THE BRIDGE

You mean to say, you dus' n't !  
Changed pint o' view ! No, no, — it 's  
overboard

With law 'an' gospel, when their ox is  
gored !

I tell ye, England's law, on sea an' land,  
Hez ollers ben, "*I've gut the heaviest hand.*"  
Take nary man ? Fine preachin' from *her*  
lips !

Why, she hez taken hunderds from our  
ships,

An' would agin, an' swear she had a right to,  
Ef we warn't strong enough to be per-  
lite to.

Of all the sarse thet I can call to mind,  
England *doos* make the most onpleasant  
kind :

It 's you 're the sinner ollers, she 's the  
saint ;

Wut 's good 's all English, all thet is n't  
ain't ;

Wut profits her is ollers right an' just,  
An' ef you don't read Scriptor so, you  
must ;

She 's praised herself ontill she fairly thinks  
There ain't no light in Natur when she  
winks ;

Hain't she the Ten Comman'ments in her  
pus ?

Could the world stir 'thout she went, tu,  
ez nus ?

She ain't like other mortals, thet 's a fact :  
*She* never stopped the habus-corpus act,  
Nor specie payments, nor she never yet  
Cut down the int'rest on her public debt ;  
*She* don't put down rebellions, lets 'em  
breed,

An' 's ollers willin' Ireland should secede ;  
She 's all thet 's honest, bonnable, an' fair,  
An' when the vartoos died they made her  
heir.

## THE MONIMENT

Wal, wal, two wrongs don't never make a  
right ;

Ef we 're mistaken, own up, an' don't  
fight :

For gracious 'sake, ha'n't we enough to du  
'thout gettin' up a fight with England, tu ?  
She thinks we 're rabble-rid —

## THE BRIDGE

An' so we can't  
Distinguish 'twixt *You ought n't an' You*  
*sha'n't !*

She jedges by herself ; she 's no idear  
How 't stiddies folks to give 'em their fair  
sheer :

The odds 'twixt her an' us is plain 's a  
steeple, —

Her People's turned to Mob, our Mob 's  
turned People.

## THE MONIMENT

She 's riled jes' now —

## THE BRIDGE

Plain proof her cause ain't strong, —  
The one thet fust gits mad 's 'most ollers  
wrong.

Why, sence she helped in lickin' Nap the  
Fust,

An' pricked a bubble jest agoin' to bust,  
With Rooshy, Prooshy, Austy, all assist-  
in',

Th' ain't nut a face but wut she 's shook her  
fist in,

Ez though she done it all, an' ten times  
more,

An' nothin' never hed gut done afore,  
Nor never could agin, 'thout she wuz spliced  
On to one eend an' gin th' old airth a hoist.  
She is some punkins, thet I wun't deny,  
(For ain't she some related to you 'n' I ?)  
But there 's a few small intrists here be-  
low

Outside the counter o' John Bull an' Co,  
An' though they can't conceit how 't should  
be so,

I guess the Lord druv down Creation's  
spiles

'thout no *gret* helpin' from the British Isles,  
An' could contrive to keep things pooty  
stiff

Ef they withdrewed from business in a  
miff ;

I ha'n't no patience with sech swellin' fel-  
lers ez

Think God can't forge 'thout them to blow  
the bellerses.

## THE MONIMENT

You 're ollers quick to set your back aridge,  
Though 't suits a tom-cat more 'n a sober  
bridge :

Don't you git het : they thought the thing  
was planned ;  
They 'll cool off when they come to under-  
stand.

## THE BRIDGE

Ef *thet's* wut you expect, you 'll *hev* to wait ;  
Folks never understand the folks they hate :  
She 'll fin' some other grievance jest ez good,  
'fore the month's out, to git misunderstood.  
England cool off ! She 'll do it, ef she sees  
She's run her head into a swarm o' bees.  
I ain't so prejudiced ez wut you spose :  
I hev thought England was the best thet  
goes ;  
Remember (no, you can't), when *I* was  
reared,  
*God save the King* was all the tune you  
heerd :  
But it's enough to turn Wachuset roun'  
This stumpin' fellers when you think  
they're down.

## THE MONIMENT

But, neighbor, ef they prove their claim at  
law,  
The best way is to settle, an' not jaw.  
An' don't le' 's mutter 'bout the awfle bricks  
We 'll give 'em, ef we ketch 'em in a fix :  
That 'ere's most frequently the kin' o' talk  
Of critters can't be kicked to toe the chalk ;  
Your "You 'll see *nex'* time !" an' "Look  
out bumby !"   
'Most ollers ends in eatin' umble-pie.  
'T wun't pay to scringe to England : will it  
pay  
To fear thet meaner bully, old "They 'll  
say" ?  
Suppose they *du* say : words are drefle  
bores,  
But they ain't quite so bad ez seventy-fours.  
Wut England wants is jest a wedge to fit  
Where it 'll help to widen out our split :  
She's found her wedge, an' 't ain't for us to  
come  
An' lend the beetle thet's to drive it home.  
For growed-up folks like us 't would be a  
scandle,  
When we git sarsed, to fly right off the  
handle.  
England ain't *all* bad, coz she thinks us  
blind :  
Ef she can't change her skin, she can her  
mind ;  
An' we shall see her change it double-quick,

Soon ez we've proved thet we're a-goin' to  
lick.  
She an' Columby's gut to be fas' friends :  
For the world prospers by their privit ends :  
'T would put the clock back all o' fifty years  
Ef they should fall together by the ears.

## THE BRIDGE

I 'gree to thet ; she's nigh us to wut  
France is ;  
But then she 'll hev to make the fust ad-  
vances ;  
We've gut pride, tu, an' gut it by good  
rights,  
An' ketch *me* stoopin' to pick up the mites  
O' condescension she 'll be lettin' fall  
When she finds out we ain't dead arter all !  
I tell ye wut, it takes more 'n one good week  
Afore *my* nose forgits it's hed a tweak.

## THE MONIMENT

She 'll come out right bumby, thet I 'll  
engage,  
Soon ez she gits to seein' we're of age ;  
This talkin' down o' hers ain't wuth a fuss ;  
It's nat'ral ez nut likin' 't is to us ;  
Ef we're agoin' to prove we *be* growed-up,  
'T wun't be by barkin' like a tarrier pup,  
But turnin' to an' makin' things ez good  
Ez wut we're ollers braggin' that we could ;  
We're boun' to be good friends, an' so  
we'd oughto,  
In spite of all the fools both sides the water.

## THE BRIDGE

I b'lieve thet's so ; but hearken in your  
ear, —  
I'm older 'n you, — Peace wun't keep house  
with Fear :  
Ef you want peace, the thing you've gut tu  
du  
Is jes' to show you're up to fightin', tu.  
I recollect how sailors' rights was won,  
Yard locked in yard, hot gun-lip kissin'  
gun :  
Why, afore thet, John Bull sot up thet he  
Hed gut a kind o' mortgage on the sea ;  
You 'd thought he held by Gran'ther  
Adam's will,  
An' ef you knuckle down, *he* 'll think so still.  
Better thet all our ships an' all their crews  
Should sink to rot in ocean's dreamless ooze,  
Each torn flag wavin' challenge ez it went,  
An' each dumb gun a brave man's moni-  
ment,

Than seek sech peace ez only cowards  
crave :  
Give *me* the peace of dead men or of brave!

## THE MONIMENT

I say, ole boy, it ain't the Glorious Fourth:  
You'd oughto larned 'fore this wut talk wuz  
worth.

It ain't *our* nose thet gits put out o' jint;  
It's England thet gives up her dearest pint.  
We've gut, I tell ye now, enough to du  
In our own fem'ly fight, afore we're thru.  
I hoped, las' spring, jest arter Sumter's  
shame,

When every flag-staff flapped its tethered  
flame,

An' all the people, startled from their  
doubt,

Come must'r in' to the flag with sech a  
shout, —

I hoped to see things settled 'fore this fall,  
The Rebbles licked, Jeff Davis hanged, an'  
all;

Then come Bull Run, an' *sence* then I've  
ben waitin'

Like boys in Jennoary thaw for skatin',  
Nothin' to du but watch my shadder's trace  
Swing, like a ship at anchor, roun' my base,  
With daylight's flood an' ebb: it's gittin'  
slow,

An' I 'most think we'd better let 'em go.  
I tell ye wut, this war's a-goin' to cost —

## THE BRIDGE

An' I tell *you* it wun't be money lost;  
Taxes milks dry, but, neighbor, you'll allow  
Thet havin' things onsettled kills the cow:  
We've gut to fix this thing for good an' all;  
It's no use buildin' wut's a-goin' to fall.  
I'm older 'n you, an' I've seen things an'  
men,

An' *my* experence, — tell ye wut it's ben:  
Folks thet worked thorough was the ones  
thet thriv,

But bad wuk follers ye ez long 's ye live;  
You can't git red on 't; jest ez sure ez sin,  
It's ollers askin' to be done agin:  
Ef we should part, it would n't be a week  
'Fore your soft-soddered peace would spring  
aleak.

We've turned our cuffs up, but, to put her  
thru,

We must git mad an' off with jackets, tu;  
'T wun't du to think thet killin' ain't per-  
lite, —

You've gut to be in airnest, ef you fight;  
Why, two thirds o' the Rebbles 'ould cut  
dirt,

Ef they once thought thet Guv'ment meant  
to hurt;

An' I *du* wish our Gin'rails hed in mind  
The folks in front more than the folks be-  
hind;

You wun't do much until you think it's God,  
An' not constitoounts, thet holds the rod;  
We want some more o' Gideon's sword, I  
jedge,

For proclamations ha'n't no gret of edge;  
There's nothin' for a cancer but the knife,  
Unless you set by 't more than by your life.  
I've seen hard times; I see a war begun  
Thet folks thet love their bellies never'd  
won;

Pharo's lean kine hung on for seven long  
year;

But when 't was done, we did n't count it  
dear;

Why, law an' order, honor, civil right,  
Ef they *ain't* wuth it, wut *is* wuth a fight?  
I'm older 'n you: the plough, the axe, the  
mill,

All kin's o' labor an' all kin's o' skill,  
Would be a rabbit in a wile-cat's claw,  
Ef 't warn't for thet slow critter, 'stablished  
law;

Onsettle *thet*, an' all the world goes whiz,  
A screw's gut loose in everythin' there is:  
Good buttresses once settled, don't you fret  
An' stir 'em; take a bridge's word for thet!  
Young folks are smart, but all ain't good  
thet's new;

I guess the gran'thers they knowed sunthin',  
tu.

## THE MONIMENT

Amen to thet! build sure in the beginnin':  
An' then don't never tech the underpinnin':  
Th' older a gub'ment is, the better 't suits;  
New ones hunt folks's corns out like new  
boots:

Change jes' for change, is like them big  
hotels

Where they shift plates, an' let ye live on  
smells.

## THE BRIDGE

Wal, don't give up afore the ship goes  
down:

It's a stiff gale, but Providence wun't  
drown;

An' God wun't leave us yit to sink or swim,  
 Ef we don't fail to du wut 's right by Him.  
 This land o' ourn, I tell ye, 's gut to be  
 A better country than man ever see.  
 I feel my sperit swellin' with a cry  
 Thet seems to say, "Break forth an' prophesy!"  
 O strange New World, thet yit wast never  
 young,  
 Whose youth from thee by gripin' need was  
 wrung,  
 Brown foundlin' o' the woods, whose baby-  
 bed  
 Was prowled roun' by the Injun's cracklin'  
 tread,  
 An' who grew'st strong thru shifts an' wants  
 an' pains,  
 Nussed by stern men with empires in their  
 brains,  
 Who saw in vision their young Ishmel strain  
 With each hard hand a vassal ocean's mane,  
 Thou, skilled by Freedom an' by gret events  
 To pitch new States ez Old-World men  
 pitch tents,  
 Thou, taught by Fate to know Jehovah's  
 plan  
 Thet man's devices can't unmake a man,  
 An' whose free latch-string never was  
 drawn in  
 Against the poorest child of Adam's kin, —  
 The grave's not dug where traitor hands  
 shall lay  
 In fearful haste thy murdered corse away!  
 I see —

Jest here some dogs begun to bark,  
 So thet I lost old Concord's last remark:  
 I listened long, but all I seemed to hear  
 Was dead leaves gossipin' on some birch-  
 trees near;  
 But ez they hed n't no gret things to say,  
 An' sed 'em often, I come right away,  
 An', walkin' home'ards, jest to pass the  
 time,  
 I put some thoughts thet bothered me in  
 rhyme;  
 I hain't hed time to fairly try 'em on,  
 But here they be — it's

### JONATHAN TO JOHN

It don't seem hardly right, John,  
 When both my hands was full,  
 To stump me to a fight, John, —  
 Your cousin, tu, John Bull!

Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess  
 We know it now," sez he,  
 "The lion's paw is all the law,  
 Accordin' to J. B.,  
 Thet's fit for you an' me!"

You wonder why we're hot, John?  
 Your mark wuz on the guns,  
 The neutral guns, thet shot, John,  
 Our brothers an' our sons:  
 Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess  
 There's human blood," sez he,  
 "By fits an' starts, in Yankee hearts,  
 Though 't may surprise J. B.  
 More 'n it would you an' me."

Ef I turned mad dogs loose, John,  
 On *your* front-parlor stairs,  
 Would it jest meet your views, John,  
 To wait an' sue their heirs?  
 Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess,  
 I on'y guess," sez he,  
 "Thet ef Vattel on *his* toes fell,  
 'T would kind o' rile J. B.,  
 Ez wal ez you an' me!"

Who made the law thet hurts, John,  
*Heads I win*, — ditto tails?  
 "J. B." was on his shirts, John,  
 Unless my memory fails.  
 Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess  
 (I'm good at thet)," sez he,  
 "Thet sauce for goose ain't *jest* the juice  
 For ganders with J. B.,  
 No more 'n with you or me!"

When your rights was our wrongs, John,  
 You did n't stop for fuss, —  
 Britanny's trident prongs, John,  
 Was good 'nough law for us.  
 Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess,  
 Though physic's good," sez he,  
 "It does n't foller thet he can swaller  
 Prescriptions signed 'J. B.,'  
 Put up by you an' me!"

We own the ocean, tu, John:  
 You mus' n' take it hard,  
 Ef we can't think with you, John,  
 It's jest your own back-yard.  
 Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess,  
 Ef *thet*'s his claim," sez he,  
 "The fencin'-stuff 'll cost enough  
 To bust up friend J. B.,  
 Ez wal ez you an' me!"



Why talk so drefle big, John,  
Of honor when it meant

You did n't care a fig, John,

But jest for *ten per cent*?

Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess

He 's like the rest," sez he :

"When all is done, it 's number one

Thet 's nearest to J. B.,

Ez wal ez t' you an' me !"

We give the critters back, John,

Cos Abram thought 't was right ;

It warn't your bullyin' clack, John,

Provokin' us to fight.

Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess

We 've a hard row," sez he,

"To hoe jest now ; but thet, somehow,

May happen to J. B.,

Ez wal ez you an' me !"

We ain't so weak an' poor, John,

With twenty million people,

An' close to every door, John,

A school-house an' a steeple.

Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess,

It is a fact," sez he,

"The surest plan to make a Man

Is, think him so, J. B.,

Ez much ez you or me !"

Our folks believe in Law, John ;

An' it 's for her sake, now,

They 've left the axe an' saw, John,

The anvil an' the plough.

Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess,

Ef 't warn't for law," sez he,

"There 'd be one shindy from here to

Indy ;

An' thet don't suit J. B.

(When 't ain't 'twixt you an' me !)"

We know we 've got a cause, John,

Thet 's honest, just, an' true ;

We thought 't would win applause, John,

Ef nowheres else, from you.

Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess

His love of right," sez he,

"Hangs by a rotten fibre o' cotton :

There 's natur' in J. B.,

Ez wal 'z in you an' me !"

The South says, "*Poor folks down !*" John,

An' "*All men up !*" say we, —

White, yaller, black, an' brown, John :

Now which is your idee ?

Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess,

John preaches wal," sez he ;

"But, sermon thru, an' come to *du*,

Why, there 's the old J. B.

A-crowdin' you an' me !"

Shall it be love, or hate, John ?

It 's you thet 's to decide ;

Ain't *your* bonds held by Fate, John,

Like all the world's beside ?

Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess

Wise men forgive," sez he,

"But not forgit ; an' some time yit

Thet truth may strike J. B.,

Ez wal ez you an' me !"

God means to make this land, John,

Clear thru, from sea to sea,

Believe an' understand, John,

The *wuth* o' bein' free.

Ole Uncle S. sez he, "I guess,

God's price is high," sez he ;

"But nothin' else than wut He sells

Wears long, an' thet J. B.

May larn, like you an' me !"

### No. III

### BIRDOFREDUM SAWIN, ESQ., TO MR. HOSEA BIGLOW

*With the following Letter from the REV-  
EREND HOMER WILBUR, A. M.*

TO THE EDITORS OF THE ATLANTIC  
MONTHLY

JAALAM, 7th Feb., 1862.

RESPECTED FRIENDS, — If I know myself, — and surely a man can hardly be supposed to have overpassed the limit of fourscore years without attaining to some proficiency in that most useful branch of learning (*e caelo descendit*, says the pagan poet), — I have no great smack of that weakness which would press upon the publick attention any matter pertaining to my private affairs. But since the following letter of Mr. Sawin contains not only a direct allusion to myself, but that in connection with a topic of interest to all those engaged in the publick ministrations of the sanctuary, I may be pardoned for touching briefly thereupon. Mr. Sawin was never a stated attendant upon my

preaching, — never, as I believe, even an occasional one, since the erection of the new house (where we now worship) in 1845. He did, indeed, for a time, supply a not unacceptible bass in the choir; but, whether on some umbrage (*omnibus hoc vitium est cantoribus*) taken against the bass-viol, then, and till his decease in 1850 (*et. 77.*) under the charge of Mr. Asaph Perley, or, as was reported by others, on account of an imminent subscription for a new bell, he thenceforth absented himself from all outward and visible communion. Yet he seems to have preserved (*altâ mente repostum*), as it were, in the pickle of a mind soured by prejudice, a lasting *scunner*, as he would call it, against our staid and decent form of worship; for I would rather in that wise interpret his fling, than suppose that any chance tares sown by my pulpit discourses should survive so long, while good seed too often fails to root itself. I humbly trust that I have no personal feeling in the matter; though I know that, if we sound any man deep enough, our lead shall bring up the mud of human nature at last. The Bretons believe in an evil spirit which they call *ar c'houskezik*, whose office it is to make the congregation drowsy; and though I have never had reason to think that he was specially busy among my flock, yet have I seen enough to make me sometimes regret the hinged seats of the ancient meeting-house, whose lively clatter, not unwillingly intensified by boys beyond eye-shot of the tithing-man, served at intervals as a wholesome *réveil*. It is true, I have numbered among my parishioners some who are proof against the prophylactic fennel, nay, whose gift of somnolence rivalled that of the Cretan Rip Van Winkle, Epimenides, and who, nevertheless, complained not so much of the substance as of the length of my (by them unheard) discourses. Some ingenious persons of a philosophick turn have assured us that our pulpits were set too high, and that the soporifick tendency increased with the ratio of the angle in which the hearer's eye was constrained to seek the preacher. This were a curious topik for investigation. There can be no doubt that some sermons are pitched too high, and I remember many struggles with the drowsy fiend in

my youth. Happy Saint Anthony of Padua, whose finny acolytes, however they might profit, could never murmur! *Quare fremuerunt gentes?* Who is he that can twice a week be inspired, or has eloquence (*ui ita dicam*) always on tap? A good man, and, next to David, a sacred poet (himself, haply, not inexpert of evil in this particular), has said, —

“The worst speak something good: if all want  
sense,  
God takes a text and preacheth patience.”

There are one or two other points in Mr. Sawin's letter which I would also briefly animadvert upon. And first, concerning the claim he sets up to a certain superiority of blood and lineage in the people of our Southern States, now unhappily in rebellion against lawful authority and their own better interests. There is a sort of opinions, anachronisms at once and anachorisms, foreign both to the age and the country, that maintain a feeble and buzzing existence, scarce to be called life, like winter flies, which in mild weather crawl out from obscure nooks and crannies to expatiate in the sun, and sometimes acquire vigor enough to disturb with their enforced familiarity the studious hours of the scholar. One of the most stupid and pertinacious of these is the theory that the Southern States were settled by a class of emigrants from the Old World socially superior to those who founded the institutions of New England. The Virginians especially lay claim to this generosity of lineage, which were of no possible account, were it not for the fact that such superstitions are sometimes not without their effect on the course of human affairs. The early adventurers to Massachusetts at least paid their passages; no felons were ever shipped thither; and though it be true that many deboshed younger brothers of what are called good families may have sought refuge in Virginia, it is equally certain that a great part of the early deportations thither were the sweepings of the London streets and the leavings of the London stews. It was this my Lord Bacon had in mind when he wrote: “It is a shameful and unblessed thing to take the scum of people and wicked condemned men to be the people with whom you plant.” That certain names are found there is nothing to the

purpose, for, even had an *alias* been beyond the invention of the knaves of that generation, it is known that servants were often called by their masters' names, as slaves are now. On what the heralds call the spindle side, some, at least, of the oldest Virginian families are descended from matrons who were exported and sold for so many hogsheads of tobacco the head. So notorious was this, that it became one of the jokes of contemporary playwrights, not only that men bankrupt in purse and character were "food for the Plantations" (and this before the settlement of New England), but also that any drab would suffice to wive such pitiful adventurers. "Never choose a wife as if you were going to Virginia," says Middleton in one of his comedies. The mule is apt to forget all but the equine side of his pedigree. How early the counterfeit nobility of the Old Dominion became a topic of ridicule in the Mother Country may be learned from a play of Mrs. Behn's, founded on the Rebellion of Bacon: for even these kennels of literature may yield a fact or two to pay the raking. Mrs. Flirt, the keeper of a Virginia ordinary, calls herself the daughter of a baronet, "undone in the late rebellion,"—her father having in truth been a tailor,—and three of the Council, assuming to themselves an equal splendor of origin, are shown to have been, one "a broken exciseman who came over a poor servant," another a tinker transported for theft, and the third "a common pickpocket often flogged at the cart's tail." The ancestry of South Carolina will as little pass muster at the Herald's Visitation, though I hold them to have been more reputable, inasmuch as many of them were honest tradesmen and artisans, in some measure exiles for conscience' sake, who would have smiled at the high-flying nonsense of their descendants. Some of the more respectable were Jews. The absurdity of supposing a population of eight millions all sprung from gentle loins in the course of a century and a half is too manifest for confutation. But of what use to discuss the matter? An expert genealogist will provide any solvent man with a *genus et proavos* to order. My Lord Burleigh used to say, with Aristotle and the Emperor Frederick II. to back him, that

"nobility was ancient riches," whence also the Spanish were wont to call their nobles *ricos hombres*, and the aristocracy of America are the descendants of those who first became wealthy, by whatever means. Petroleum will in this wise be the source of much good blood among our posterity. The aristocracy of the South, such as it is, has the shallowest of all foundations, for it is only skin-deep,—the most odious of all, for, while affecting to despise trade, it traces its origin to a successful traffick in men, women, and children, and still draws its chief revenues thence. And though, as Doctor Chamberlayne consolingly says in his "Present State of England," "to become a Merchant of Foreign Commerce, without serving any Apprentisage, hath been allowed no disparagement to a Gentleman born, especially to a younger Brother," yet I conceive that he would hardly have made a like exception in favour of the particular trade in question. Oddly enough this trade reverses the ordinary standards of social respectability no less than of morals, for the retail and domestick is as creditable as the wholesale and foreign is degrading to him who follows it. Are our morals, then, no better than *mores* after all? I do not believe that such aristocracy as exists at the South (for I hold with Marius, *fortissimum quemque generosissimum*) will be found an element of anything like persistent strength in war,—thinking the saying of Lord Bacon (whom one quaintly called *inductionis dominus et Verulamii*) as true as it is pithy, that "the more gentlemen, ever the lower books of subsidies." It is odd enough as an historical precedent, that, while the fathers of New England were laying deep in religion, education, and freedom the basis of a polity which has substantially outlasted any then existing, the first work of the founders of Virginia, as may be seen in Wingfield's "Memorial," was conspiracy and rebellion,—order yet, as showing the changes which are wrought by circumstance, that the first insurrection in South Carolina was against the aristocratical scheme of the Proprietary Government. I do not find that the cuticular aristocracy of the South has added anything to the refinements of civilization except the carrying of bowie-knives and the chewing of tobacco,—a high-toned

Southern gentleman being commonly not only *quadrumanous* but *quidruminant*.

I confess that the present letter of Mr. Sawin increases my doubts as to the sincerity of the convictions which he professes, and I am inclined to think that the triumph of the legitimate Government, sure sooner or later to take place, will find him and a large majority of his newly adopted fellow-citizens (who hold with Dædalus, the primal sitter-on-the-fence, that *medium tenere tutissimum*) original Union men. The criticisms towards the close of his letter on certain of our failings are worthy to be seriously perpended; for he is not, as I think, without a spice of vulgar shrewdness. *Fas est et ab hoste doceri*: there is no reckoning without your host. As to the good-nature in us which he seems to gird at, while I would not consecrate a chapel, as they have not scrupled to do in France, to *Nôtre Dame de la Haine* (Our Lady of Hate), yet I cannot forget that the corruption of good-nature is the generation of laxity of principle. Good-nature is our national characteristick; and though it be, perhaps, nothing more than a culpable weakness or cowardice, when it leads us to put up tamely with manifold impositions and breaches of implied contracts (as too frequently in our publick conveyances) it becomes a positive crime when it leads us to look unresentfully on peculation, and to regard treason to the best Government that ever existed as something with which a gentleman may shake hands without soiling his fingers. I do not think the gallows-tree the most profitable member of our *Sylva*; but, since it continues to be planted, I would fain see a Northern limb ingrafted on it, that it may bear some other fruit than loyal Tennesseeans.

A relic has recently been discovered on the east bank of Bushy Brook in North Jaalam, which I conceive to be an inscription in Runick characters relating to the early expedition of the Northmen to this continent. I shall make fuller investigations, and communicate the result in due season. Respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

HOMER WILBUR, A. M.

P. S. — I inclose a year's subscription from Deacon Tinkham.

I HED it on my min' las' time, when I  
write ye started,  
To tech the leadin' featur's o' my gittin' m  
convarted;  
But, ez my letters hez to go clearn roun'  
by way o' Cuby,  
'T wun't seem no staler now than then, by  
th' time it gits where you be.  
You know up North, though secs an' things  
air plenty ez you please,  
Ther' warn't nut one on 'em thet come jes'  
square with my ideas:  
They all on 'em wuz too much mixed with  
Covenants o' Works,  
An' would hev answered jest ez wal for  
Afrikins an' Turks,  
Fer where 's a Christian's privilege an' his  
rewards ensuin',  
Ef 't ain't perfassin' right and eend 'thout  
nary need o' doin' ?  
I dessay they suit workin'-folks thet ain't  
noways pertie'lar,  
But nut your Southun gen'leman thet  
keeps his parpendic'lar;  
I don't blame nary man thet casts his lot  
along o' his folks,  
But ef you cal'late to save me, 't must be  
with folks thet is folks;  
Cov'nants o' works go 'ginst my grain, but  
down here I 've found out  
The true fus'-fem'ly A 1 plan, — here 's  
how it come about.  
When I fus' sot up with Miss S., sez she to  
me, sez she,  
"Without you git religion, Sir, the thing  
can't never be;  
Nut but wut I respect," sez she, "your  
intellectle part,  
But you wun't noways du for me athout a  
change o' heart:  
Nothun religion works wal North, but it's  
ez soft ez spruce,  
Compared to urn, for keepin' sound," sez  
she, "upon the goose;  
A day's experunce 'd prove to ye, ez easy 'z  
pull a trigger,  
It takes the Southun pint o' view to raise  
ten bales a nigger;  
You 'll fin' thet human natur', South, ain't  
wholesome more 'n skin-deep,  
An' once 't a darkie's took with it, he wun't  
be wuth his keep."  
"How shell I git it, Ma'am?" — sez  
I. "Attend the nex' camp-meet-  
in,"



Sez she, "an' it 'll come to ye ez cheap ez  
onbleached sheetin'."

Wal, so I went along an' hearn most an  
impressive sarmon

About besprinklin' Afriky with fourth-  
proof dew o' Harmon :

He did n't put no weaknin' in, but gin it tu  
us hot,

'Z ef he an' Satan 'd ben two bulls in one  
five-acre lot :

I don't purtend to foller him, but give ye  
jes' the heads;

For pulpit ellerkence, you know, 'most  
ollers kin' o' spreads.

Ham's seed wuz gin to us in chairge, an'  
should n't we be li'ble

In Kingdom Come, ef we kep' back their  
priv'lege in the Bible ?

The cusses an' the promerses make one gret  
chain, an' ef

You snake one link out here, one there, how  
much on 't ud be lef' ?

All things wuz gin to man for 's use, his  
sarvice, an' delight;

An' don't the Greek an' Hebrew words thet  
mean a Man mean White ?

Ain't it belittlin' the Good Book in all its  
proudest featur

To think 't wuz wrote for black an' brown  
an' 'lasses-colored creaturs,

Thet could n' read it, ef they would, nor  
ain't by lor allowed to,

But ough' to take wut we think suits their  
natures, an' be proud to ?

Warn't it more prof'table to bring your raw  
materil thru

Where you can work it into grace an' into  
cotton, tu,

Than sendin' missionaries out where fevers  
might defeat 'em,

An' ef the butcher did n' call, their p'rish-  
ioners might eat 'em ?

An' then, agin, wut airthly use ? Nor  
'twarn't our fault, in so fur

Ez Yankee skippers would keep on atotin'  
on 'em over.

'T improved the whites by savin' 'em from  
ary need o' workin',

An' kep' the blacks from bein' lost thru  
idleness an' shirkin' ;

We took to 'em ez nat'ral ez a barn-owl  
doos to mice,

An' hed our hull time on our hands to keep  
us out o' vice;

It made us feel ez pop'lar ez a hen doos  
with one chicken,

An' fill our place in Natur's scale by givin'  
'em a lickin' :

For why should Cæsar git his dues more 'n  
Juno, Pomp, an' Cuffy ?

It 's justifyin' Ham to spare a nigger when  
he 's stuffy.

Where 'd their soles go tu, like to know, ef  
we should let 'em ketch

Freeknowledgeism an' Fourierism an' Speri-  
toolism an' sech ?

When Satan sets himself to work to raise  
his very bes' muss,

He scatters roun' onscriptur'l views relatin'  
to Ones'mus.

You 'd ough' to seen, though, how his facs  
an' argymunce an' figgers

Drawed tears o' real conviction from a lot  
o' pen'tent niggers!

It warn't like Wilbur's meetin', where  
you 're shet up in a pew,

Your dickeys sorrin' off your ears, an' bilin'  
to be thru;

Ther' wuz a tent clost by thet hed a kag o'  
sunthin' in it,

Where you could go, ef you wuz dry, an'  
damp ye in a minute;

An' ef you did drow off a spell, ther' wuz  
n't no occasion

To lose the thread, because, ye see, he  
bellered like all Bashan.

It's dry work follerin' argymunce an' so,  
'twix' this an' thet,

I felt conviction weighin' down somehow  
inside my hat;

It growed an' growed like Jonah's gourd,  
a kin' o' whirlin' ketched me,

Ontil I fin'ly clean gin out an' owned up  
thet he 'd fetched me;

An' when nine tenths o' th' perrish took to  
tumblin' roun' an' hollerin',

I did n' fin' no gret in th' way o' turnin' tu  
an' follerin'.

Soon ez Miss S. see thet, sez she, "*Thet* 's  
wut I call wuth seein' !

*Thet* 's actin' like a reas'nable an' intellectle  
bein' !"

An' so we fin'ly made it up, concluded to  
hitch hosses,

An' here I be 'n my ellermunt among crea-  
tion's bosses;

Arter I 'd drawed sech heaps o' blanks,  
Fortin at last hez sent a prize,

An' chose me for a shinin' light o' mission-  
ary entaprise.

This leads me to another pint on which I've  
changed my plan  
O' thinkin' so 's 't I might become a  
straight-out Southun man.

Miss S. (her maiden name wuz Higgs, o'  
the fus' fem'ly here)

On her Ma's side 's all Juggernot, on Pa's  
all Cavileer,

An' sence I've married into her an' stepped  
into her shoes,

It ain't more 'n nateral thet I should mod-  
derfy my views:

I've ben a-readin' in Debow until I've  
fairly gut

So 'nlightened thet I'd full ez lives ha' ben  
a Dook ez nut;

An' when we've laid ye all out stiff, an'  
Jeff hez gut his crown,

An' comes to pick his nobles out, *wun't* this  
child be in town!

We 'll hev an Age o' Chivverlry surpassin'  
Mister Burke's,

Where every fem'ly is fus'-best an' nary  
white man works:

Our system 's sech, the thing 'll root ez easy  
ez a tater;

For while your lords in furrin parts ain't  
noways marked by natur',

Nor sot apart from ornery folks in featur  
nor in figgers,

Ef ourn 'll keep their faces washed, you 'll  
know 'em from their niggers.

Ain't *sech* things wuth secedin' for, an'  
gittin' red o' you

Thet waller in your low idees, an' will tell  
all is blue?

Fact is, we *air* a diff'rent race, an' I, for  
one, don't see,

Sech havin' ollers ben the case, how w' ever  
*did* agree.

It's sunthin' thet you lab'rin'-folks up  
North hed ough' to think on,

Thet Higgses can't bemean themselves to  
rulin' by a Lincoln, —

Thet men, (an' guv'nors, tu,) thet hez sech  
Normal names ez Pickens,

Accustomed to no kin' o' work, 'thout 't is  
to givin' lickins,

Can't measure votes with folks thet get  
their livins from their farms,

An' probly think thet Law 's ez good ez  
hevin' coats o' arms.

Sence I've ben here, I've hired a chap to  
look about for me

To git me a transplantable an' thrifty  
fem'ly-tree,

An' he tells *me* the Sawins is ez much o'  
Normal blood

Ez Pickens an' the rest on 'em, an' older 'n  
Noah's flood.

Your Normal schools wun't turn ye into  
Normals, for it 's clear,

Ef eddykatin' done the thing, they'd be  
some skurcer here.

Pickenses, Boggsges, Pettuses, Magoffins,  
Letchers, Polks, —

Where can you scare up names like them  
among your mudsill folks?

Ther 's nothin' to compare with 'em, you'd  
fin', ef you should glance,

Among the tip-top femerlies in Englan',  
nor in France:

I've hearn frum 'sponsible men whose  
word wuz full ez good 's their

note,  
Men thet can run their face for drinks, an'  
keep a Sunday coat,

That they wuz all on 'em come down, an'  
come down pooty fur,

From folks thet, 'thout their crowns  
wuz on, ou' doors would n' never

stir,  
Nor thet ther' warn't a Southun man but  
wut wuz *primy fashy*

O' the bes' blood in Europe, yis, an' Afriky  
an' Ashy:

Sech bein' the case, is 't likely we should  
bend like cotton wickin',

Or set down under anythin' so low-lived ez  
a lickin'?

More 'n this, — hain't we the literatoor an  
science, tu, by gorry?

Hain't we them intellectle twins, them  
giants, Simms an' Maury,

Each with full twice the ushle brains, like  
nothin' thet I know,

'thout 't wuz a double-headed calf I see  
once to a show?

For all thet, I warn't jest at fust in favor  
o' secedin' ;

I wuz for layin' low a spell to find out  
where 't wuz leadin',

For hevin' South-Carliny try her hand at  
sepritnationin',

She takin' resks an' findin' funds, an' we co-  
operationin', —

I mean a kin' o' hangin' roun' an' settin' on  
the fence,  
Till Prov'dunce pinto how to jump an'  
save the most expense;  
I recollected thet 'ere mine o' lead 'to  
Shiraz Centre  
Thet bust up Jabez Pettibone, an' did n't  
want to ventur'  
'Fore I wuz sartin wut come out ud pay for  
wut went in,  
For swappin' silver off for lead ain't the  
sure way to win;  
(An', fact, it *doos* look now ez though —  
but folks must live an' larn —  
We should git lead, an' more 'n we want,  
out o' the Old Consarn;)  
But when I see a man so wise an' honest  
ez Buchanan  
A-lettin' us hev all the forts an' all the  
arms an' cannon,  
Admittin' we wuz nat'lly right an' you wuz  
nat'lly wrong,  
Coz you wuz lab'rin'-folks an' we wuz wut  
they call *bong-tong*,  
An' coz there warn't no fight in ye more 'n  
in a mashed potater,  
While two o' *us* can't skurceely meet but  
wut we fight by natur',  
An' th' ain't a bar-room here would pay for  
openin' on 't a night,  
Without it giv the priverlege o' bein' shot  
at sight,  
Which proves we 're Natur's noblemen,  
with whom it don't surprise  
The British aristoxty should feel boun' to  
sympathize, —  
Seein' all this, an' seein', tu, the thing wuz  
strikin' roots  
While Uncle Sam sot still in hopes thet  
some one 'd bring his boots,  
I thought th' ole Union's hoops wuz off,  
an' let myself be sucked in  
To rise a peg an' jine the crowd thet went  
for reconstructin', —  
Thet is to hev the pardnership under th'  
ole name continner  
Jest ez it wuz, we drorrin' pay, you findin'  
bone an' sinner, —  
On'y to put it in the bond, an' enter 't in  
the journals,  
Thet you 're the nat'ral rank an' file, an'  
we the nat'ral kurnels.  
Now this I thought a fees'ble plan, thet  
'ud work smooth ez grease,

Suitin' the Nineteenth Century an' Upper  
Ten idees,  
An' there I meant to stick, an' so did most  
o' th' leaders, tu,  
Coz we all thought the chance wuz good o'  
puttin' on it thru;  
But Jeff he hit upon a way o' helpin' on us  
forrard  
By bein' unannermous, — a trick you ain't  
quite up to, Norrard.  
A Baldin hain't no more 'f a chance with  
them new apple-corers  
Than folks's oppersition views aginst the  
Ringtail Roarers;  
They'll take 'em out on him 'bout east, —  
one canter on a rail  
Makes a man feel unannermous ez Jonah  
in the whale;  
Or ef he's a slow-moulded cuss thet can't  
seem quite t' 'gree,  
He gits the noose by tellergraph upon the  
nighes' tree:  
Their mission-work with Afrikins hez put  
'em up, thet's sartin,  
To all the mos' across-lot ways o' preachin'  
an' convartin';  
I'll bet my hat th' ain't nary priest, nor all  
on 'em together,  
Thet cairs conviction to the min' like Rev-  
eren' Taranfeather;  
Why, he sot up with me one night, an' la-  
bored to sech purpose,  
Thet (ez an owl by daylight 'mongst a  
flock o' teazin' chirpers  
Sees clearer 'n mud the wickedness o' eatin'  
little birds)  
I see my error an' agreed to shen it arter-  
wurds;  
An' I should say, (to jedge our folks by  
facs in my possession,)  
Thet three's Unannermous where one's a  
'Riginal Secession;  
So it's a thing you fellers North may safely  
bet your chink on,  
Thet we're all water-proofed agin th'  
usurpin' reign o' Lincoln.  
Jeff's *some*. He's gut another plan thet hez  
pertic'lar merits,  
In givin' things a cheerfle look an' stiffnin'  
loose-hung sperits;  
For while your million papers, wut with  
lyin' an' discussin',  
Keep folks's tempers all on eend a-fumin'  
an' a-fussin',

A-wondrin' this an' guessin' thet, an'  
 dreadin' every night  
 The breechin' o' the Univarse 'll break  
 afore it's light,  
 Our papers don't putend to print on'y wut  
 Guv'ment choose,  
 An' thet insures us all to git the very best  
 o' noose :  
 Jeff hez it of all sorts an' kines, an' sarves  
 it out ez wanted,  
 So s' 't every man gits wut he likes an' no-  
 body ain't scanted ;  
 Sometimes it's vict'ries (they're 'bout  
 all ther' is that's cheap down  
 here,)  
 Sometimes it's France an' England on the  
 jump to interfere.  
 Fact is, the less the people know o' wut  
 ther' is a-doin',  
 The hendier 't is for Guv'ment, sence it  
 henders trouble brewin' ;  
 An' noose is like a shipplaster, — it's good,  
 ef you believe it,  
 Or, wut's all same, the other man thet's  
 goin' to receive it :  
 Ef you 've a son in th' army, wy, it's com-  
 fortin' to hear  
 He 'll hev no gretter resk to run than seein'  
 th' in'my's rear,  
 Coz, ef an F. F. looks at 'em, they ollers  
 break an' run,  
 Or wilt right down ez debtors will thet  
 stumble on a dun,  
 (An' this, ef an'thin', proves the wuth o'  
 proper fem'ly pride,  
 Fer sech mean shucks ez creditors are all  
 on Lincoln's side) ;  
 Ef I hev scrip thet wun't go off no more 'n  
 a Belgin rifle,  
 An' read thet it's at par on 'Change, it  
 makes me feel deli'f'le ;  
 It's cheerin', tu, where every man mus'  
 fortify his bed,  
 To hear thet Freedom's the one thing our  
 darkies mos'ly dread,  
 An' thet experunce, time 'n' agin, to Dixie's  
 Land hez shown  
 Ther' 's nothin' like a powder-cask fer a  
 stiddy corner-stone ;  
 Ain't it ez good ez nuts, when salt is sellin'  
 by the ounce  
 For its own weight in Treash'ry-bons, (ef  
 bought in small amounts,)  
 When even whiskey's gittin' skurce an  
 sugar can't be found,

To know thet all the ellersments o' luxury  
 abound ?  
 An' don't it glorify sal'-pork, to come to  
 understand  
 It's wut the Richmon' editors call fatness  
 o' the land !  
 Nex' thing to knowin' you 're well off is  
*nut* to know when y' ain't ;  
 An' ef Jeff says all's goin' wal, who 'll  
 ventur' t' say it ain't ?  
 This cairn the Constitooshun roun' ez Jeff  
 doos in his hat  
 Is hendier a drefle sight, an' comes more  
 kin' o' pat.  
 I tell ye wut, my jedgment is you 're pooty  
 sure to fail,  
 Ez long 'z the head keeps turnin' back for  
 counsel to the tail :  
 Th' advantiges of our consarn for bein'  
 prompt air gret,  
 While, 'long o' Congress, you can't strike,  
 'f you git an iron het ;  
 They bother roun' with argoo'in', an' va-  
 r'ous sorts o' foolin',  
 To make sure ef it's leg'ly het, an' all the  
 while it's coolin',  
 So s' 't when you come to strike, it ain't no  
 gret to wish ye j'y on,  
 An' hurts the hammer 'z much or more ez  
 wut it doos the iron,  
 Jeff don't allow no jawin'-sprees for three  
 months at a stretch,  
 Knowin' the ears long speeches suits air  
 mostly made to metch ;  
 He jes' ropes in your tonguey chaps an'  
 reg'lar ten-inch bores  
 An' lets 'em play at Congress, ef they 'll  
 du it with closed doors ;  
 So they ain't no more bothersome than ef  
 we 'd took an' sunk 'em,  
 An' yit enj'y th' exclusive right to one  
 another's Buncombe  
 'thout doin' nobody no hurt, an' 'thout its  
 costin' nothin',  
 Their pay bein' jes' Confedrit funds, they  
 findin' keep an' clothin' ;  
 They taste the sweets o' public life, an'  
 plan their little jobs,  
 An' suck the Treash'ry (no gret harm, for  
 it's ez dry ez cobs,)  
 An' go thru all the motions jest ez safe ez  
 in a prison,  
 An' hev their business to themselves, while  
 Buregard hez hisn :



Ez long 'z he gives the Hessians fits, com-  
mittees can't make bother  
'bout whether 't's done the legle way or  
whether 't's done tother.  
An' *I* tell *you* you 've gut to larn thet War  
ain't one long teeter  
Betwixt *I* wan' to an' 'T *wun't du*, debatin'  
like a skeetur  
Afore he lights, — all is, to give the other  
side a millin',  
An' arter thet 's done, th' ain't no resk but  
wut the lor 'll be willin';  
No metter wut the guv'ment is, ez nigh ez  
I can hit it,  
A lickin' 's constitooshunal, pervidin' *We*  
don't git it.  
Jeff don't stan' dilly-dallyin', afore he takes  
a fort,  
(With no one in,) to git the leave o' the  
nex' Soopreme Court,  
Nor don't want forty-'leven weeks o' jawin'  
an' expoundin',  
To prove a nigger hez a right to save him,  
ef he 's drownin';  
Whereas ole Abe 'ud sink afore he 'd let a  
darkie boost him,  
Ef Taney should n't come along an' hed n't  
interdooced him.  
It ain't your twenty millions thet 'll ever  
block Jeff's game,  
But one Man thet wun't let 'em jog jest ez  
he 's takin' aim:  
Your numbers they may strengthen ye or  
weaken ye, ez 't heppens  
They 're willin' to be helpin' hands or  
wuss-'n-nothin' cap'ns.

I 've chose my side, an' 't ain't no odds ef I  
wuz drawed with magnets,  
Or ef I thought it prudenter to jine the  
nighes' bagnets;  
I 've made my ch'ice, an' ciphered out,  
from all I see an' heard,  
Th' ole Constitooshun never 'd git her decks  
for action cleared,  
Long 'z you elect for Congressmen poor  
shots thet want to go  
Coz they can't seem to git their grub no  
otherways than so,  
An' let your bes' men stay to home coz they  
wun't show ez talkers,  
Nor can't be hired to fool ye an' sof'-soap  
ye at a caucus, —  
Long 'z ye set by Rotashun more 'n ye do  
by folks's merits,

Ez though experunee thriv by change o'  
sile, like corn an' kerrits, —  
Long 'z you allow a critter's "claims" coz,  
spite o' shoves an' tippins,  
He 's kep' his private pan jest where  
't would ketch mos' public drip-  
pin's, —  
Long 'z A. 'll turn tu an' grin' B. 's exe, ef  
B. 'll help him grin' hisn,  
(An' thet 's the main idee by which your  
leadin' men hev risen,) —  
Long 'z you let *ary* exe be groun', 'less 't is  
to cut the weasan'  
O' sneaks thet dunno till they 're told wut  
is an' wut ain't Treason, —  
Long 'z ye give out commissions to a lot o'  
peddlin' drones  
Thet trade in whiskey with their men an'  
skin 'em to their bones, —  
Long 'z ye sift out "safe" canderdates thet  
no one ain't afraid on  
Coz they 're so thund'r'in' eminent for bein'  
never heard on,  
An' hain't no record, ez it 's called, for  
folks to pick a hole in,  
Ez ef it hurt a man to hev a body with a  
soul in,  
An' it wuz ostentashun to be showin' on 't  
about,  
When half his feller-citizens contrive to du  
without, —  
Long 'z you suppose your votes can turn  
biled kebbage into brain,  
An' ary man thet 's pop'lar 's fit to drive a  
lightnin'-train, —  
Long 'z you believe democracy means *I 'm*  
*ez good ez you be*,  
An' that a feller from the ranks can't be a  
knave or booby, —  
Long 'z Congress seems purvired, like yer  
street-cars an' yer 'busses,  
With ollers room for jes' one more o' your  
spiled-in-bakin' cusses,  
Dough 'thout the emptins of a soul, an' yit  
with means about 'em  
(Like essence-peddlers<sup>1</sup>) thet 'll make  
folks long to be without 'em,  
Jes heavy 'nough to turn a scale thet 's  
doubtful the wrong way,  
An' make their nat'ral arsenal o' bein' nasty  
pay, —  
Long 'z them things last, (an' *I* don't see  
no gret signs of improvin',)

<sup>1</sup> A rustic euphemism for the American variety of  
the *Mephitis*. H. W.

I sha'n't up stakes, not hardly yit, nor 't  
 would n't pay for movin';  
 For, 'fore you lick us, it 'll be the long'st  
 day ever you see.  
 Yourn, (ez I 'xpec' to be nex' spring,)  
 B., MARKISS O' BIG BOOSY.

No. IV

A MESSAGE OF JEFF DAVIS IN  
 SECRET SESSION

*Conjecturally reported by H. BIGLOW*

TO THE EDITORS OF THE ATLANTIC  
 MONTHLY

JAALAM, 10 March, 1862.

GENTLEMEN, — My leisure has been so entirely occupied with the hitherto fruitless endeavour to decypher the Runick inscription whose fortunate discovery I mentioned in my last communication, that I have not found time to discuss, as I had intended, the great problem of what we are to do with slavery, — a topik on which the publick mind in this place is at present more than ever agitated. What my wishes and hopes are I need not say, but for safe conclusions I do not conceive that we are yet in possession of facts enough on which to bottom them with certainty. Acknowledging the hand of Providence, as I do, in all events, I am sometimes inclined to think that they are wiser than we, and am willing to wait till we have made this continent once more a place where freemen can live in security and honour, before assuming any further responsibility. This is the view taken by my neighbour Habakkuk Sloansure, Esq., the president of our bank, whose opinion in the practical affairs of life has great weight with me, as I have generally found it to be justified by the event, and whose counsel, had I followed it, would have saved me from an unfortunate investment of a considerable part of the painful economies of half a century in the Northwest-Passage Tunnel. After a somewhat animated discussion with this gentleman a few days since, I expanded, on the *audi alteram partem* principle, something which he happened to say by way of illustration, into the following fable.

FESTINA LENTE

ONCE on a time there was a pool  
 Fringed all about with flag-leaves cool  
 And spotted with cow-lilies garish,  
 Of frogs and pouts the ancient parish.  
 Alders the creaking redwings sink on,  
 Tussocks that house blithe Bob o' Lincoln  
 Hedged round the unassailed seclusion,  
 Where muskrats piled their cells Carthusian;  
 And many a moss-embroidered log,  
 The watering-place of summer frog,  
 Slept and decayed with patient skill,  
 As watering-places sometimes will.

Now in this Abbey of Theleme,  
 Which realized the fairest dream  
 That ever dozing bull-frog had,  
 Sunned on a half-sunk lily-pad,  
 There rose a party with a mission  
 To mend the polliwogs' condition,  
 Who notified the selectmen  
 To call a meeting there and then.  
 "Some kind of steps," they said, "are needed;  
 They don't come on so fast as we did:  
 Let 's dock their tails; if that don't make 'em  
 Frogs by brevet, the Old One take 'em!  
 That boy, that came the other day  
 To dig some flag-root down this way,  
 His jack-knife left, and 't is a sign  
 That Heaven approves of our design:  
 'T were wicked not to urge the step on,  
 When Providence has sent the weapon."

Old croakers, deacons of the mire,  
 That led the deep batrachian choir,  
*Uk! Uk! Caronk!* with bass that might  
 Have left Lablache's out of sight,  
 Shook nobby heads, and said, "No go!  
 You 'd better let 'em try to grow:  
 Old Doctor Time is slow, but still  
 He does know how to make a pill."

But vain was all their hoarsest bass,  
 Their old experience out of place,  
 And spite of croaking and entreating,  
 The vote was carried in marsh-meeting.

"Lord knows," protest the polliwogs,  
 "We 're anxious to be grown-up frogs;  
 But don't push in to do the work  
 Of Nature till she prove a shirk;  
 'T is not by jumps that she advances,  
 But wins her way by circumstances:  
 Pray, wait awhile, until you know  
 We 're so contrived as not to grow;  
 Let Nature take her own direction,  
 And she 'll absorb our imperfection;  
 You might n't like 'em to appear with,  
 But we must have the things to steer with."

"No," piped the party of reform,  
 "All great results are ta'en by storm;  
 Fate holds her best gifts till we show  
 We 've strength to make her let them go;  
 The Providence that works in history,

And seems to some folks such a mystery,  
Does not creep slowly on *incog.*,  
But moves by jumps, a mighty frog;  
No more reject the Age's chrism,  
Your queues are an anachronism;  
No more the Future's promise mock,  
But lay your tails upon the block,  
Thankful that we the means have voted  
To have you thus to frogs promoted."

The thing was done, the tails were cropped,  
And home each philadpole hopped,  
In faith rewarded to exult,  
And wait the beautiful result.  
Too soon it came; our pool, so long  
The theme of patriot bull-frog's song,  
Next day was reeking, fit to smother,  
With heads and tails that missed each other,—  
Here snoutless tails, there tailless snouts;  
The only gainers were the pouts.

## MORAL

From lower to the higher next,  
Not to the top, is Nature's text;  
And embryo Good, to reach full stature,  
Absorbs the Evil in its nature.

I think that nothing will ever give permanent peace and security to this continent but the extirpation of Slavery therefrom, and that the occasion is nigh; but I would do nothing hastily or vindictively, nor presume to jog the elbow of Providence. No desperate measures for me till we are sure that all others are hopeless,—*flectere si nequeo SUPEROS, Acheronta movebo*. To make Emancipation a reform instead of a revolution is worth a little patience, that we may have the Border States first, and then the non-slaveholders of the Cotton States, with us in principle,—a consummation that seems to be nearer than many imagine. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*, is not to be taken in a literal sense by statesmen, whose problem is to get justice done with as little jar as possible to existing order, which has at least so much of heaven in it that it is not chaos. Our first duty toward our enslaved brother is to educate him, whether he be white or black. The first need of the free black is to elevate himself according to the standard of this material generation. So soon as the Ethiopian goes in his chariot, he will find not only Apostles, but Chief Priests and Scribes and Pharisees willing to ride with him.

"Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se  
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit."

I rejoice in the President's late Message,

which at last proclaims the Government on the side of freedom, justice, and sound policy.

As I write, comes the news of our disaster at Hampton Roads. I do not understand the supineness which, after fair warning, leaves wood to an unequal conflict with iron. It is not enough merely to have the right on our side, if we stick to the old flint-lock of tradition. I have observed in my parochial experience (*haud ignarus mali*) that the Devil is prompt to adopt the latest inventions of destructive warfare, and may thus take even such a three-decker as Bishop Butler at an advantage. It is curious, that, as gunpowder made armour useless on shore, so armour is having its revenge by baffling its old enemy at sea; and that, while gunpowder robbed land warfare of nearly all its picturesqueness to give even greater stateliness and sublimity to a sea-fight, armour bids fair to degrade the latter into a squabble between two iron-shelled turtles.

Yours, with esteem and respect,  
HOMER WILBUR, A. M.

P. S. — I had wellnigh forgotten to say that the object of this letter is to enclose a communication from the gifted pen of Mr. Biglow.

I SENT you a messige, my friens, t' other  
day,  
To tell you I 'd nothin' pertickler to say :  
't wuz the day our new nation gut kin' o'  
stillborn,  
So 't wuz my pleasant dooty t' acknow-  
ledge the corn,  
An' I see clearly then, ef I did n't before,  
Thet the *augur* in inauguration means *bore*.  
I need n't tell *you* thet my messige wuz  
written  
To diffuse correc' notions in France an'  
Gret Britten,  
An' agin to impress on the poppylar mind  
The comfort an' wisdom o' goin' it blind,—  
To say thet I did n't abate not a hooter  
O' my faith in a happy an' glorious futur',  
Ez rich in each soshle an' p'litickle blessin'  
Ez them thet we now hed the joy o' pos-  
sessin',  
With a people united, an' longin' to die  
For wut *we* call their country, without ask-  
in' why,

An' all the gret things we concluded to  
slope for  
Ez much within reach now ez ever—to  
hope for.  
We 've gut all the ellerments, this very  
hour,  
Thet make up a fus'-class, self-governin'  
power:  
We 've a war, an' a debt, an' a flag; an' ef  
this  
Ain't to be inderpendunt, why, wut on 'airth  
is?  
An' nothin' now henders our takin' our  
station  
Ez the freest, enlightenedest, civerlized  
nation,  
Built up on our bran'-new politickle thesis  
Thet a Gov'ment's fust right is to tumble  
to pieces,—  
I say nothin' henders our takin' our place  
Ez the very fus'-best o' the whole human  
race,  
A spittin' tobacker ez proud ez you please  
On Victory's bes' carpets, or loafin' at  
ease  
In the Tool'ries front-parlor, discussin' af-  
fairs  
With our heels on the backs o' Napoleon's  
new chairs,  
An' princes a-mixin' our cocktails an'  
slings,—  
Excep', wal, excep' jest a very few things,  
Sech ez navies an' armies an' wherewith to  
pay,  
An' gettin' our sogers to run t' other way,  
An' not be too over-pertickler in tryin'  
To hunt up the very las' ditches to die in.

Ther' are critters so base thet they want it  
explained  
Jes' wut is the totle amount thet we 've  
gained,  
Ez ef we could maysure stupenjious events  
By the low Yankee stan'ard o' dollars an'  
cents:  
They seem to forgit, thet, sence last year  
revolved,  
We 've succeeded in gittin' seceshed an'  
dissolved,  
An' thet no one can't hope to git thru dis-  
solootion  
'thout some kin' o' strain on the best Con-  
stitootion.  
Who asks for a prospec' more flettrin' an'  
bright,

When from here clean to Texas it's all  
one free fight?  
Hain't we rescued from Seward the gret  
leadin' featur  
Thet makes it wuth while to be reasonin'  
creatures?  
Hain't we saved Habus Coppers, improved  
it in fact,  
By suspendin' the Unionists 'stid o' the  
Act?  
Ain't the laws free to all? Where on  
airth else d' ye see  
Every freeman improvin' his own rope an'  
tree?  
Ain't our piety sech (in our speeches an'  
messiges)  
Ez t' astonish ourselves in the bes'-com-  
posed pessiges,  
An' to make folks thet knowed us in th'  
ole state o' things  
Think convarsion ez easy ez drinkin' gin-  
slings?

It's ne'ssary to take a good confident tone  
With the public; but here, jest amongst  
us, I own  
Things look blacker 'n thunder. Ther' 's  
no use denyin'  
We 're clean out o' money, an' 'most out o'  
lyin';  
Two things a young nation can't mennage  
without,  
Ef she wants to look wal at her fust comin'  
out;  
For the fust supplies physickle strength,  
while the second  
Gives a morril edvantage thet 's hard to be  
reckoned:  
For this latter I 'm willin' to du wut I  
can;  
For the former you 'll hev to consult on a  
plan,—  
Though our *fust* want (an' this pint I want  
your best views on)  
Is plausible paper to print I. O. U.s on.  
Some genulemen think it would cure all  
our cankers  
In the way o' finance, ef we jes' hanged  
the bankers;  
An' I own the proposle 'ud square with my  
views,  
Ef their lives wuz n't all thet we 'd left  
'em to lose.  
Some say thet more confidence might be  
inspired,



Ef we voted our cities an' towns to be  
fired, —

A plan thet 'ud suttently tax our endurance,  
Coz 't would be our own bills we should  
git for th' insurance;

But cinders, no metter how sacred we  
think 'em,

Might n't strike furrin minds ez good  
sources of income,

Nor the people, perhaps, would n't like the  
eclaw

O' bein' all turned into paytriots by law.

Some want we should buy all the cotton  
an' burn it,

On a pledge, when we've gut thru the  
war, to return it, —

Then to take the proceeds an' hold *them* ez  
security

For an issue o' bonds to be met at maturity  
With an issue o' notes to be paid in hard  
cash

On the fus' Monday follerin' the 'tarnal  
Allsmash:

This hez a safe air, an', once hold o' the  
gold,

'ud leave our vile plunderers out in the  
cold,

An' *might* temp' John Bull, ef it warn't for the  
dip he

Once gut from the banks o' my own Mas-  
sissippi.

Some think we could make, by arrangin'  
the figgers,

A hendy home-currency out of our niggers;  
But it wun't du to lean much on ary sech  
staff,

For they 're gittin' tu current a'ready, by  
half.

One gennleman says, ef we lef' our loan  
out

Where Floyd could git hold on 't *he* 'd take  
it, no doubt;

But 't ain't jes' the takin, though 't hez a  
good look,

We mus' git sunthin' out on it arter it's  
took,

An' we need now more 'n ever, with sorrer  
I own,

Thet some one another should let us a loan,  
Sence a soger wun't fight, on'y jes' while  
he draws his

Pay down on the nail, for the best of all  
causes,

'thout askin' to know wut the quarrel 's  
about, —

An' once come to thet, why, our game is  
played out.

It 's ez true ez though I should n't never  
hev said it,

Thet a hitch hez took place in our system  
o' credit;

I swear it's all right in my speeches an'  
messiges,

But ther' 's idees afloat, ez ther' is about  
sessiges :

Folks wun't take a bond ez a basis to trade  
on,

Without nosin' round to find out wut it's  
made on,

An' the thought more an' more thru the  
public min' crosses

Thet our Treshry hez gut 'mos' too many  
dead hosses.

Wut 's called credit, you see, is some like  
a balloon,

Thet looks while it's up 'most ez harn-  
some 'z a moon,

But once git a leak in 't, an' wut looked so  
grand

Caves righ' down in a jiffy ez flat ez your  
hand.

Now the world is a drefle mean place, for  
our sins,

Where ther' ollus is critters about with  
long pins

A-prickin' the bubbles we've blowed with  
sech care,

An' provin' ther' 's nothin' inside but bad  
air :

They 're all Stuart Millses, poor-white trash,  
an' sneaks,

Without no more chivverlry 'n Choctaws or  
Creeks,

Who think a real gennleman's promise to  
pay

Is meant to be took in trade's ornery way :  
Them fellers an' I could n' never agree ;

They 're the nateral foes o' the Southun  
Idee ;

I 'd gladly take all of our other resks on  
me

To be red o' this low-lived politikle 'con-  
my !

Now a dastardly notion is gittin' about

Thet our bladder is bust an' the gas oozin'  
out,

An' onless we can mennage in some way to  
stop it,  
Why, the thing's a gone coon, an' we  
might ez wal drop it.  
Brag works wal at fust, but it ain't jes' the  
thing  
For a stiddy inves'ment the shiners to  
bring,  
An' votin' we're prosp'rous a hundred  
times over  
Wun't change bein' starved into livin' in  
clover.  
Manassas done sunthin' tow'rds drawin' the  
wool  
O'er the green, antislavery eyes o' John  
Bull :  
Oh, *warn't* it a godsend, jes' when sech  
tight fixes  
Wuz crowdin' us mourners, to throw  
double-sixes !  
I wuz tempted to think, an' it wuz n't no  
wonder,  
Ther' wuz reelly a Providence, — over or  
under, —  
When, all packed for Nashville, I fust  
ascertained  
From the papers up North wut a victory  
we'd gained.  
't wuz the time for diffusin' corree' views  
abroad  
Of our union an' strength an' relyin' on  
God ;  
An', fact, when I'd gut thru my fust big  
surprise,  
I much ez half b'lieved in my own tallest  
lies,  
An' conveyed the idee thet the whole  
Southun popperlace  
Wuz Spartans all on the keen jump for  
Thermopperlies,  
Thet set on the Lincolnites' bombs till they  
bust,  
An' fight for the priv'lege o' dyin' the  
fust ;  
But Roanoke, Bufort, Millspring, an' the  
rest  
Of our recent starn-foremost successes out  
West,  
Hain't left us a foot for our swellin' to  
stand on, —  
We've showed *too* much o' wut Buregard  
calls *abandon*,  
For all our Thermopperlies (an' it's a  
marcy

We hain't hed no more) hev ben clean vicy-  
varsy,  
An' wut Spartans wuz lef' when the battle  
wuz done  
Wuz them thet wuz too unambitious to run.  
Oh, ef we hed on'y jes' gut Reecognition,  
Things now would ha' ben in a different  
position !  
You'd ha' hed all you wanted : the paper  
blockade  
Smashed up into toothpicks ; unlimited  
trade  
In the one thing thet's needfle, till niggers,  
I swow,  
Hed ben thicker 'n provisional shin-plasters  
now ;  
Quinine by the ton 'ginst the shakes when  
they seize ye ;  
Nice paper to coin into C. S. A. specie ;  
The voice of the driver'd be heerd in our  
land,  
An' the univarse scringe, ef we lifted our  
hand :  
Would n't *thet* be some like a fulfillin' the  
prophecies,  
With all the fus' fem'lies in all the fust  
offices ?  
't wuz a beautiful dream, an' all sorrer is  
idle, —  
But ef Lincoln *would* ha' hanged Mason an'  
Slidell !  
For would n't the Yankees hev found they'd  
ketched Tartars,  
Ef they'd raised two sech critters as them  
into martyrs ?  
Mason wuz F. F. V., though a cheap card  
to win on,  
But t' other was jes' New York trash to  
begin on ;  
They ain't o' no good in Európean pellices,  
But think wut a help they'd ha' ben on  
their gallowses !  
They'd ha' felt they wuz truly fulfillin'  
their mission,  
An' oh, how dog-cheap we'd ha' gut Ree-  
cognition !  
But somehow another, wutever we've  
tried,  
Though the the'ry's fust-rate, the facts  
*wun't* coincide :  
Facts are contrary 'z mules, an' ez hard in  
the mouth,

An' they allus hev showed a mean spite to the South.

Sech bein' the case, we hed best look about For some kin' o' way to slip *our* necks out : Le's vote our las' dollar, ef one can be found,

(An', at any rate, votin' it hez a good sound,) —

Le's swear thet to arms all our people is flyin',

(The critters can't read, an' wun't know how we're lyin',) —

Thet Toombs is advancin' to sack Cincinnati,

With a rovin' commission to pillage an' slahter, —

Thet we've throwed to the winds all regard for wut's lawfle,

An' gone in for sunthin' promiscu'sly awfle. Ye see, hitherto, it's our own knaves an' fools

Thet we've used, (those for whetstones, an' t' others ez tools,)

An' now our las' chance is in puttin' to test The same kin' o' cattle up North an' out West, —

Your Belmonts, Vallandighams, Woodses, an' sech,

Poor shotes thet ye could n't persuade us to tech,

Not in ornery times, though we're willin' to feed 'em

With a nod now an' then, when we happen to need 'em ;

Why, for my part, I'd ruther shake hands with a nigger

Than with cusses that load an' don't darst dror a trigger;

They're the wust wooden nutmegs the Yankees perdooce,

Shaky everywhere else, an' jes' sound on the goose;

They ain't wuth a cuss, an' I set nothin' by 'em,

But we're in sech a fix thet I s'pose we mus' try 'em.

I — But, Gennlemen, here's a despatch jes' come in

Which shows thet the tide's begun turnin' agin', —

Gret Cornfedrit success! C'lumbus eeva-coated!

I mus' run down an' hev the thing properly stated,

An' show wut a triumph it is, an' how lucky

To fin'ly git red o' thet cussed Kentucky, — An' how, sence Fort Donelson, winnin' the day

Consists in triumphantly gittin' away.

## No. V

### SPEECH OF HONOURABLE PRESERVED DOE IN SECRET CAUCUS

TO THE EDITORS OF THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

JAALAM, 12th April, 1862.

GENTLEMEN, — As I cannot but hope that the ultimate, if not speedy, success of the national arms is now sufficiently ascertained, sure as I am of the righteousness of our cause and its consequent claim on the blessing of God, (for I would not show a faith inferior to that of the Pagan historian with his *Facile evenit quod Dis cordi est*,) it seems to me a suitable occasion to withdraw our minds a moment from the confusing din of battle to objects of peaceful and permanent interest. Let us not neglect the monuments of preterite history because what shall be history is so diligently making under our eyes. *Cras ingens iterabimus æquor*; to-morrow will be time enough for that stormy sea; to-day let me engage the attention of your readers with the Runick inscription to whose fortunate discovery I have heretofore alluded. Well may we say with the poet, *Multa renascuntur quæ jam cecidere*. And I would premise, that, although I can no longer resist the evidence of my own senses from the stone before me to the ante-Columbian discovery of this continent by the Northmen, *gens inclytissima*, as they are called in a Palermitan inscription, written fortunately in a less debatable character than that which I am about to decipher, yet I would by no means be understood as wishing to vilipend the merits of the great Genoese, whose name will never be forgotten so long as the inspiring strains of "Hail Columbia" shall continue to be heard. Though he must be stripped also of whatever praise may belong to the experiment of the egg, which I find proverbially attributed by Castilian authors to a certain Juanito or Jack, (perhaps an offshoot of our giant-killing mythus,) his name

will still remain one of the most illustrious of modern times. But the impartial historian owes a duty likewise to obscure merit, and my solicitude to render a tardy justice is perhaps quickened by my having known those who, had their own field of labour been less secluded, might have found a readier acceptance with the reading publick. I could give an example, but I forbear: *forsitan nostris ex ossibus oritur ultor.*

Touching Runick inscriptions, I find that they may be classed under three general heads: 1°. Those which are understood by the Danish Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries, and Professor Rafn, their Secretary; 2°. Those which are comprehensible only by Mr. Rafn; and 3°. Those which neither the Society, Mr. Rafn, nor anybody else can be said in any definite sense to understand, and which accordingly offer peculiar temptations to enucleating sagacity. These last are naturally deemed the most valuable by intelligent antiquaries, and to this class the stone now in my possession fortunately belongs. Such give a picturesque variety to ancient events, because susceptible oftentimes of as many interpretations as there are individual archaeologists; and since facts are only the pulp in which the Idea or event-seed is softly imbedded till it ripen, it is of little consequence what colour or flavour we attribute to them, provided it be agreeable. Availing myself of the obliging assistance of Mr. Arphaxad Bowers, an ingenious photographick artist, whose house-on-wheels has now stood for three years on our Meeting-House Green, with the somewhat contradictory inscription, — "*our motto is onward,*" — I have sent accurate copies of my treasure to many learned men and societies, both native and European. I may hereafter communicate their different and (*me judice*) equally erroneous solutions. I solicit also, Messrs. Editors, your own acceptance of the copy herewith enclosed. I need only premise further, that the stone itself is a goodly block of metamorphick sandstone, and that the Runes resemble very nearly the ornithichnites or fossil bird-tracks of Dr. Hitchcock, but with less regularity or apparent design than is displayed by those remarkable geological monuments. These are rather the *non bene junctarum discordia semina rerum*. Resolved to leave no door

open to cavil, I first of all attempted the elucidation of this remarkable example of lithick literature by the ordinary modes, but with no adequate return for my labour. I then considered myself amply justified in resorting to that heroic treatment the felicity of which, as applied by the great Bentley to Milton, had long ago enlisted my admiration. Indeed, I had already made up my mind, that, in case good fortune should throw any such invaluable record in my way, I would proceed with it in the following simple and satisfactory method. After a cursory examination, merely sufficing for an approximative estimate of its length, I would write down a hypothetical inscription based upon antecedent probabilities, and then proceed to extract from the characters engraven on the stone a meaning as nearly as possible conformed to this *a priori* product of my own ingenuity. The result more than justified my hopes, inasmuch as the two inscriptions were made without any great violence to tally in all essential particulars. I then proceeded, not without some anxiety, to my second test, which was, to read the Runick letters diagonally, and again with the same success. With an excitement pardonable under the circumstances, yet tempered with thankful humility, I now applied my last and severest trial, my *experimentum crucis*. I turned the stone, now doubly precious in my eyes, with scrupulous exactness upside down. The physical exertion so far displaced my spectacles as to derange for a moment the focus of vision. I confess that it was with some tremulousness that I readjusted them upon my nose, and prepared my mind to bear with calmness any disappointment that might ensue. But, *O albo dies notanda lapillo!* what was my delight to find that the change of position had effected none in the sense of the writing, even by so much as a single letter! I was now, and justly, as I think, satisfied of the conscientious exactness of my interpretation. It is as follows:

HERE  
BJARNA GRIMOESSON  
FIRST DRANK CLOUD-BROTHER  
THROUGH CHILD-OF-LAND-AND-  
WATER:

that is, drew smoke through a reed stem. In other words, we have here a record of the first smoking of the herb *Nicotiana Ta-*



*bacum* by an European on this continent. The probable results of this discovery are so vast as to baffle conjecture. If it be objected, that the smoking of a pipe would hardly justify the setting up of a memorial stone, I answer, that even now the Moquis Indian, ere he takes his first whiff, bows reverently toward the four quarters of the sky in succession, and that the loftiest monuments have been reared to perpetuate fame, which is the dream of the shadow of smoke. The *Saga*, it will be remembered, leaves this Bjarna to a fate something like that of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, on board a sinking ship in the "wormy sea," having generously given up his place in the boat to a certain Iceland. It is doubly pleasant, therefore, to meet with this proof that the brave old man arrived safely in Vinland, and that his declining years were cheered by the respectful attentions of the dusky denizens of our then uninhabited forest. Most of all was I gratified, however, in thus linking forever the name of my native town with one of the most momentous occurrences of modern times. Hitherto Jaalam, though in soil, climate, and geographical position as highly qualified to be the theatre of remarkable historical incidents as any spot on the earth's surface, has been, if I may say it without seeming to question the wisdom of Providence, almost maliciously neglected, as it might appear, by occurrences of world-wide interest in want of a situation. And in matters of this nature it must be confessed that adequate events are as necessary as the *vates sacer* to record them. Jaalam stood always modestly ready, but circumstances made no fitting response to her generous intentions. Now, however, she assumes her place on the historic roll. I have hitherto been a zealous opponent of the Circean herb, but I shall now re-examine the question without bias.

I am aware that the Rev. Jonas Tutchel, in a recent communication to the "Bogus Four Corners Weekly Meridian," has endeavored to show that this is the sepulchral inscription of Thorwald Eriksson, who, as is well known, was slain in Vinland by the natives. But I think he has been misled by a preconceived theory, and cannot but feel that he has thus made an ungracious return for my allowing him to inspect the stone

with the aid of my own glasses (he having by accident left his at home) and in my own study. The heathen ancients might have instructed this Christian minister in the rites of hospitality; but much is to be pardoned to the spirit of self-love. He must indeed be ingenious who can make out the words *hær hvílir* from any characters in the inscription in question, which, whatever else it may be, is certainly not mortuary. And even should the reverend gentleman succeed in persuading some fantastical wits of the soundness of his views, I do not see what useful end he will have gained. For if the English Courts of Law hold the testimony of gravestones from the burial-grounds of Protestant dissenters to be questionable, even where it is essential in proving a descent, I cannot conceive that the epitaphial assertions of heathens should be esteemed of more authority by any man of orthodox sentiments.

At this moment, happening to cast my eyes upon the stone, whose characters a transverse light from my southern window brings out with singular distinctness, another interpretation has occurred to me, promising even more interesting results. I hasten to close my letter in order to follow at once the clue thus providentially suggested.

I inclose, as usual, a contribution from Mr. Biglow, and remain,

Gentlemen, with esteem and respect,

Your Obedient Humble Servant,

HOMER WILBUR, A. M.

I THANK ye, my frien's, for the warmth o' your greetin':

Ther' 's few airthly blessin's but wut 's vain an' flectin';

But ef ther' is one thet hain't *no* cracks an' flaws,

An' is wuth goin' in for, it 's pop'lar applause;

It sends up the sperits ez lively ez rockets, An' I feel it — wal, down to the eend o' my pockets.

Jes' lovin' the people is Canaan in view, But it 's Canaan paid quarterly t' hev 'em love you;

It 's a blessin' thet 's breakin' out ollus in fresh spots;

It 's a-follerin' Moses 'thout losin' the flesh-pots.

But, Gennlemen, 'scuse me, I ain't sech a  
raw cus

Ez to go luggin' ellerkence into a caucus, —  
Thet is, into one where the call compre-  
hen's

Nut the People in person, but on'y their  
frien's;

'm so kin' o' used to convincin' the masses  
Of th' edvantage o' bein' self-governin'  
asses,

I forgot thet *we* 're all o' the sort thet pull  
wires

An' arrange for the public their wants an'  
desires,

An' thet wut we hed met for wuz jes' to  
agree

Wut the People's opinions in futur' should  
be.

Now, to come to the nub, we 've ben all  
disappointed,

An' our leadin' idee's are a kind o' disjinted,  
Though, fur ez the nateral man could  
discern,

Things ough' to ha' took most an oppersite  
turn.

But The'ry is jes' like a train on the rail,  
Thet, weath' or no, puts her thru without  
fail,

White Fac'e's the ole stage thet gits  
sloughed in the ruts,

An' hez to allow for your darned efs an'  
buts,

An' so, nut intendin' no pers'nal reflections,  
They don't — don't nut allus, thet is, —  
make connections:

Sometimes, when it really doos seem thet  
they 'd oughter

Combine jest ez kindly ez nêw rum an'  
water,

Both 'll be jest ez sot in their ways ez a  
bagnet,

Ez otherwise-minded ez th' eends of a mag-  
net,

An' folks like you 'n' me, thet ain't ept to  
be sold,

Git somehow or 'nother left out in the cold.

I expected 'fore this, 'thout no gret of a row,  
Jeff D. would ha' ben where A. Lincoln is  
now,

With Taney to say 't wuz all legle an' fair,  
An' a jury o' Deemocrats ready to swear  
Thet the ingin o' State gut throwed into  
the ditch

By the fault o' the North in misplacin' the  
switch.

Things wuz ripenin' fast-rate with Buchanan  
to nuss 'em;

But the People — they would n't be Mexi-  
cans, cuss 'em!

Ain't the safeguards o' freedom upsot, 'z  
you may say,

Ef the right o' rev'lution is took clean  
away?

An' doos n't the right primy-fashy include  
The bein' entitled to nut be subdued?

The feet is, we 'd gone for the Union so  
strong,

When Union meant South ollus right an'  
North wrong,

Thet the People gut fooled into thinkin' it  
might

Worry on middlin' wal with the North in  
the right.

We might ha' ben now jest ez prosp'rous ez  
France,

Where p'litikle enterprise hez a fair chance,  
An' the People is heppy an' proud et this  
hour,

Long ez they hev the votes, to let Nap hev  
the power;

But *our* folks they went an' believed wut  
we 'd told 'em

An', the flag once insulted, no mortle could  
hold 'em.

'T wuz pervokin' jest when we wuz cert'in  
to win, —

An' I, for one, wun't trust the masses agin:  
For a People thet knows much ain't fit to  
be free

In the self-cockin', back-action style o'  
J. D.

I can't believe now but wut half on 't is  
lies;

For who 'd thought the North wuz agoin'  
to rise,

Or take the pervokin'est kin' of a stump,  
'thout 't wuz sunthin' ez pressin' ez Ga-  
br'el's las' trump?

Or who 'd ha' supposed, arter *sech* swell  
an' bluster

'bout the lick-ary-ten-on-ye fighters they 'd  
muster,

Raised by hand on brieded lightnin', ez  
op'lent 'z you please

In a primitive furrest o' femmily-trees, —  
Who 'd ha' thought thet them Southun-  
ers ever 'ud show

Starns with pedigrees to 'em like theirn to  
the foe,

Or, when the vamosin' come, ever to find  
Nat'ral masters in front an' mean white  
folks behind?

By ginger, ef I'd ha' known half I know  
now,

When I wuz to Congress, I would n't, I  
swow,

Hev let 'em cair on so high-minded an'  
sarsy,

'thout some show o' wut you may call vicy-  
varsy.

To be sure, we wuz under a contrac' jes' then  
To be dreffle forbearin' towards Southun  
men;

We hed to go sheers in preservin' the be-  
lance:

An' ez they seemed to feel they wuz wastin'  
their tellents

'thout some un to kick, 't warn't more 'n  
proper, you know,

Each should funnish his part; an' sence  
they found the toe,

An' we wuz n't cherubs—wal, we found  
the buffer,

For fear thet the Compromise System  
should suffer.

I wun't say the plan hed n't onpleasant  
featur, —

For men are perverse an' onreasonin' crea-  
tures,

An' forgit thet in this life 't ain't likely to  
heppen

Their own privit fancy should ollus be  
cappen, —

But it worked jest ez smooth ez the key of  
a safe,

An' the gret Union bearin's played free  
from all chafe.

They warn't hard to suit, ef they hed their  
own way,

An' we (thet is, some on us) made the  
thing pay:

't wuz a fair give-an'-take out of Uncle  
Sam's heap;

Ef they took wut warn't theirn, wut we  
give come ez cheap;

The elect gut the offices down to tide-  
waiter,

The people took skinnin' ez mild ez a  
tater,

Seemed to choose who they wanted tu,  
footed the bills,

An' felt kind o' 'z though they wuz havin'  
their wills,

Which kep' 'em ez harmless an' cherfle ez  
crickets,

While all we invested wuz names on the  
tickets:

Wal, ther' 's nothin', for folks fond o'  
lib'ral consumption

Free o' charge, like democ'acy tempered  
with assumption!

Now warn't thet a system wuth pains in  
presarvin',

Where the people found jints an' their  
frien's done the carvin', —

Where the many done all o' their thinkin'  
by proxy,

An' were proud on 't ez long ez 't wuz  
christened Democ'cy, —

Where the few let us sap all o' Freedom's  
foundations,

Ef you call it reformin' with prudence an'  
patience,

An' were willin' Jeff's snake-egg should  
hetch with the rest,

Ef you writ "Constitootional" over the  
nest?

But it 's all out o' kilter, ('t wuz too good to  
last.)

An' all jes' by J. D.'s perceedin' too fast;  
Ef he 'd on'y hung on for a month or two

more,

We'd ha' gut things fixed nicer 'n they hed  
ben before:

Afore he drawed off an' lef' all in confu-  
sion,

We wuz safely entrenched in the ole Con-  
stitootion,

With ar outlyin', heavy-gun, casemated  
fort

To rake all assailants, — I mean th' S. J.  
Court.

Now I never 'll acknowledge (nut ef you  
should skin me)

't wuz wise to abandon sech works to the  
in'y,

An' let him fin' out thet wut scared him so  
long,

Our whole line of argyments, lookin' so  
strong,

All our Scriptur an' law, every the'ry an'  
fac',

Wuz Quaker-guns daubed with Pro-sla-  
very black.

Why, ef the Republicans ever should git

Andy Johnson or some one to lend 'em the  
 wit  
 An' the spunk jes' to mount Constitootion  
 an' Court  
 With Columbiad guns, your real ekle-rights  
 sort,  
 Or drill out the spike from the ole Declara-  
 tion  
 Thet can kerry a solid shot clearn roun'  
 creation,  
 We 'd better take maysures for shettin' up  
 shop,  
 An' put off our stock by a vendoo or swop.  
  
 But they wun't never dare tu; you'll see  
 'em in Edom  
 'fore they ventur' to go where their doc-  
 trines 'ud lead 'em:  
 They've ben takin' our princerples up ez  
 we dropt 'em,  
 An' thought it wuz terrible 'cute to adopt  
 'em;  
 But they 'll fin' out 'fore long thet their  
 hope's ben deceivin' 'em,  
 An' thet princerples ain't o' no good, ef  
 you b'lieve in 'em;  
 It makes 'em tu stiff for a party to use,  
 Where they 'd ough' to be easy 'z an ole  
 pair o' shoes.  
 If we say 'n our pletform thet all men are  
 brothers,  
 We don't mean thet some folks ain't more  
 so 'n some others;  
 An' it's wal understood thet we make a  
 selection,  
 An' thet brotherhood kin' o' subsiles arter  
 'lection.  
 The fust thing for sound politicians to  
 larn is,  
 Thet Truth, to dror kindly in a'll sorts o'  
 harness,  
 Mus' be kep' in the abstract, — for, come  
 to apply it,  
 You're ept to hurt some folks's interists  
 by it.  
 Wal, these 'ere Republicans (some on 'em)  
 ect  
 Ez though general mexims 'ud suit speshle  
 facts;  
 An' there 's where we 'll nick 'em, there 's  
 where they 'll be lost:  
 For applyin' your princerple 's wut makes  
 it cost,  
 An' folks don't want Fourth o' July t' in-  
 terfere

With the business-consarns o' the rest o'  
 the year,  
 No more 'n they want Sunday to pry an'  
 to peek  
 Into wut they are doin' the rest o' the  
 week.  
  
 A ginooine statesman should be on his  
 guard,  
 Ef he *must* hev beliefs, nut to b'lieve 'em  
 tu hard;  
 For, ez sure-ez he does, he'll be blartin'  
 'em out  
 'thout regardin' the natur' o' man more 'n  
 a spout,  
 Nor it don't ask much gumption to pick  
 out a flaw  
 In a party whose leaders are loose in the  
 jaw:  
 An' so in our own case I ventur' to hint  
 Thet we 'd better nut air our perceedin's in  
 print,  
 Nor pass resserlootions ez long ez your arm  
 Thet may, ez things heppen to turn, du us  
 harm;  
 For when you 've done all your real mean-  
 in' to smother,  
 The darned things 'll up an' mean sunthin'  
 or 'nother.  
 Jeff'son probly meant wal with his "born  
 free an' ekle,"  
 But it's turned out a real crooked stick in  
 the sekle;  
 It's taken full eighty-odd year — don't you  
 see? —  
 From the pop'lar belief to root out thet  
 idee,  
 An', arter all, suckers on 't keep buddin'  
 forth  
 In the nat'lly onprincipled mind o' the  
 North.  
 No, never say nothin' without you 're com-  
 pelled tu,  
 An' then don't say nothin' thet you can be  
 held tu,  
 Nor don't leave no friction-idees layin'  
 loose  
 For the ign'ant to put to incend'ary use.  
  
 You know I 'm a feller thet keeps a skinned  
 eye  
 On the leetle events thet go skurryin' by,  
 Coz it's of'ner by them than by gret ones  
 you 'll see  
 Wut the p'litickle weather is likely to be.



Now I don't think the South's more'n  
begun to be licked,  
But I *du* think, ez Jeff says, the wind-bag's  
gut pricked;  
It'll blow for a spell an' keep puffin' an'  
wheezin',  
The tighter our army an' navy keep  
squeezein',—  
For they can't help spread-eaglein' long 'z  
ther' 's a mouth  
To blow Enfield's Speaker thru lef' at the  
South.  
But it's high time for us to be settin' our  
faces  
Towards reconstructin' the national basis,  
With an eye to beginnin' agin on the jolly  
ticks  
We used to chalk up 'hind the back-door o'  
politics;  
An' the fus' thing's to save wut of Slav'ry  
ther' 's lef'  
Arter this (I mus' call it) imprudence o'  
Jeff:  
For a real good Abuse, with its roots fur  
an' wide,  
Is the kin' o' thing *I* like to hev on my  
side;  
A Scriptur' name makes it ez sweet ez a  
rose,  
An' it's tougher the older an' uglier it  
grows—  
(I ain't speakin' now o' the righteousness  
of it,  
But the p'litick purchase it gives an' the  
profit).  
Things look pooty squally, it must be  
allowed,  
An' I don't see much signs of a bow in the  
cloud:  
Ther' 's too many Deemocrats—leaders  
wut 's wuss—  
Thet go for the Union 'thout carin' a  
cuss  
Ef it helps ary party thet ever wuz heard  
on,  
So our eagle ain't made a split Austrian  
bird on.  
But ther' 's still some consarvative signs to  
be found  
Thet shows the gret heart o' the People is  
sound:  
(Excuse me for usin' a stump-phrase agin,  
But, once in the way on 't, they *will* stick  
like sin:)

There's Phillips, for instance, hez jes'  
ketched a Tartar  
In the Law-'n'-Order Party of ole Cincin-  
nater;  
An' the Compromise System ain't gone out  
o' reach,  
Long 'z you keep the right limits on free-  
dom o' speech.  
'T warn't none too late, neither, to put on  
the gag,  
For he's dangerous now he goes in for the  
flag.  
Nut thet I altogether approve o' bad eggs,  
They're mos' gin'lly argymunt on its las'  
legs,—  
An' their logic is ept to be tu indiscrimi-  
nate,  
Nor don't ollus wait the right objects to  
'liminate;  
But there is a variety on 'em, you'll find,  
Jest ez usefule an' more, besides bein' re-  
fined,—  
I mean o' the sort thet are laid by the dic-  
tionary,  
Sech ez sophisms an' cant, thet'll kerry  
conviction ary  
Way thet you want to the right class o'  
men,  
An' are staler than all 't ever come from a  
hen:  
"Disunion" done wal till our resh Southun  
friends  
Took the savor all out on 't for national  
ends;  
But I guess "Abolition" 'll work a spell  
yit,  
When the war's done, an' so will "Forgive-  
an'-forgit."  
Times mus' be pooty thoroughly out o' all  
jint,  
Ef we can't make a good constitootional  
pint;  
An' the good time 'll come to be grindin'  
our exes,  
When the war goes to seed in the nettle o'  
texes:  
Ef Jon'than don't squirm, with sech helps  
to assist him,  
I give up my faith in the free-suffrage sys-  
tem;  
Democ'y wun't be nut a mite interestin',  
Nor p'litick capital much wuth investin';  
An' my notion is, to keep dark an' lay low  
Till we see the right minute to put in our  
blow.—

But I've talked longer now'n I hed any  
 idee,  
 An' ther' 's others you want to hear more'n  
 you du me ;  
 So I'll set down an' give thet 'ere bottle a  
 skrimmage,  
 For I've spoke till I'm dry ez a real graven  
 image.

No. VI

## SUNTHIN' IN THE PASTORAL LINE

TO THE EDITORS OF THE ATLANTIC  
 MONTHLY

JAALAM, 17th May, 1862.

GENTLEMEN, — At the special request of Mr. Biglow, I intended to inclose, together with his own contribution, (into which, at my suggestion, he has thrown a little more of pastoral sentiment than usual,) some passages from my sermon on the day of the National Fast, from the text, "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them," Heb. xiii. 3. But I have not leisure sufficient at present for the copying of them, even were I altogether satisfied with the production as it stands. I should prefer, I confess, to contribute the entire discourse to the pages of your respectable miscellany, if it should be found acceptable upon perusal, especially as I find the difficulty in selection of greater magnitude than I had anticipated. What passes without challenge in the fervour of oral delivery, cannot always stand the colder criticism of the closet. I am not so great an enemy of Eloquence as my friend Mr. Biglow would appear to be from some passages in his contribution for the current month. I would not, indeed, hastily suspect him of covertly glancing at myself in his somewhat caustick animadversions, albeit some of the phrases he girds at are not entire strangers to my lips. I am a more hearty admirer of the Puritans than seems now to be the fashion, and believe, that, if they Hebraized a little too much in their speech, they showed remarkable practical sagacity as statesmen and founders. But such phenomena as Puritanism are the results rather of great religious than of

merely social convulsions, and do not long survive them. So soon as an earnest conviction has cooled into a phrase, its work is over, and the best that can be done with it is to bury it. *Ite, missa est.* I am inclined to agree with Mr. Biglow that we cannot settle the great political questions which are now presenting themselves to the nation by the opinions of Jeremiah or Ezekiel as to the wants and duties of the Jews in their time, nor do I believe that an entire community with their feelings and views would be practicable or even agreeable at the present day. At the same time I could wish that their habit of subordinating the actual to the moral, the flesh to the spirit, and this world to the other, were more common. They had found out, at least, the great military secret that soul weighs more than body. — But I am suddenly called to a sick-bed in the household of a valued parishioner.

With esteem and respect,

Your obedient servant,

HOMER WILBUR.

ONCE git a smell o' musk into a draw,  
 An' it clings hold like precerdents in law:  
 Your gra'ma'am put it there, — when,  
 goodness knows, —  
 To jes' this-worldify her Sunday-clo'es;  
 But the old chist wun't sarve her gran'son's  
 wife,  
 (For, 'thout new funnitoo, wut good in  
 life ?)  
 An' so ole clawfoot, from the precinks  
 dread  
 O' the spare chamber, slinks into the shed,  
 Where, dim with dust, it fust or last sub-  
 sides  
 To holdin' seeds an' fifty things besides;  
 But better days stick fast in heart an' husk,  
 An' all you keep in 't gits a scent o' musk.

Jes' so with poets: wut they 've airly read  
 Gits kind o' worked into their heart an'  
 head,  
 So 's 't they can't seem to write but jest on  
 sheers  
 With furrin countries or played-out ideers,  
 Nor hev a feelin', ef it doos n't smack  
 O' wut some critter chose to feel 'way  
 back:  
 This makes 'em talk o' daisies, larks, an'  
 things,

Ez though we 'd nothin' here that blows an'  
sings, —  
(Why, I 'd give more for one live bobolink  
Than a square mile o' larks in printer's  
ink,) —  
This makes 'em think our fust o' May is  
May,  
Which 't ain't, for all the almanicks can  
say.

O little city-gals, don't never go it  
Blind on the word o' noospaper or poet!  
They 're apt to puff, an' May-day seldom  
looks

Up in the country ez it doos in books;  
They 're no more like than hornets'-nests  
an' hives,

Or printed sarmons be to holy lives.

I, with my trouses perched on cowhide  
boots,

Tuggin' my foundered feet out by the roots,  
Hev seen ye come to fling on April's hearse  
Your muslin nose-gays from the milliner's,  
Puzzlin' to find dry ground your queen to  
choose,

An' dance your throats sore in morocker  
shoes:

I 've seen ye an' felt proud, thet, come wut  
would,

Our Pilgrim stock wuz pethed with hardi-  
hood.

Pleasure doos make us Yankees kind o'  
winch,

Ez though 't wuz sunthin' paid for by the  
inch;

But yit we du contrive to worry thru,  
Ef Dooty tells us thet the thing 's to du,  
An' kerry a hollerday, ef we set out,  
Ez stiddily ez though 't wuz a redoubt.

I, country-born an' bred, know where to  
find

Some blooms thet make the season suit the  
mind,

An' seem to metch the doubtin' bluebird's  
notes, —

Half-vent'rin' liverworts in furry coats,  
Bloodroots, whose rolled-up leaves ef you  
uncurl,

Each on 'em 's cradle to a baby-pearl, —  
But these are jes' Spring's pickets; sure ez  
sin,

The rebbles frosts 'll try to drive 'em in;  
For half our May 's so awfully like May n't,  
't would rile a Shaker or an evrige saint;

Though I own up I like our back'ard  
springs

Thet kind o' haggle with their greens an'  
things,

An' when you 'most give up, 'thout more  
words

Toss the fields full o' blossoms, leaves, an'  
birds;

Thet 's Northun natur', slow an' apt to  
doubt,

But when it doos git stirred, ther' 's no gin-  
out!

Fust come the blackbirds clatt'rin' in tall  
trees,

An' settlin' things in windy Congresses, —  
Queer politicians, though, for I 'll be  
skinned

Ef all on 'em don't head against the wind.  
'fore long the trees begin to show belief, —

The maple crimsons to a coral-reef,  
Then saffern swarms swing off from all the  
willers

So plump they look like yaller caterpil-  
lars,

Then gray hossches'nuts leetle hands unfold  
Softer 'n a baby's be at three days old:

Thet 's robin-redbreast's almanick; he  
knows

Thet arter this ther' 's only blossom-snows;  
So, choosin' out a handy crotch an' spouse,

He goes to plast'rin' his adobe house.

Then seems to come a hitch, — things lag  
behind,

Till some fine mornin' Spring makes up her  
mind,

An' ez, when snow-swelled rivers cresh  
their dams

Heaped-up with ice thet dovetails in an'  
jams,

A leak comes spirtin' thru some pin-hole  
cleft,

Grows stronger, fercer, tears out right an'  
left,

Then all the waters bow themselves an'  
come,

Suddin, in one gret slope o' shedderin' foam,  
Jes' so our Spring gits everythin' in tune

An' gives one leap from Aperl into June:  
Then all comes crowdin' in; afore you  
think,

Young oak-leaves mist the side-hill woods  
with pink;

The catbird in the laylock-bush is loud;

The orchards turn to heaps o' rosy cloud ;  
Red-cedars blossom tu, though few folks  
know it,

An' look all dipt in sunshine like a poet ;  
The lime-trees pile their solid stacks o'  
shade

An' drows'ly simmer with the bees' sweet  
trade ;

In ellum-shrouds the flashin' hangbird  
clings

An' for the summer vy'ge his hammock  
slings ;

All down the loose-walled lanes in archin'  
bowers

The barb'ry droops its strings o' golden  
flowers,

Whose shrinkin' hearts the school-gals love  
to try

With pins, — they 'll worry yourn so, boys,  
bimeby !

But I don't love your cat'logue style, — do  
you ? —

Ez ef to sell off Natur' by vendoo ;  
One word with blood in 't 's twice ez good  
ez two :

'nuff sed, June's bridesman, poet o' the  
year,

Gladness on wings, the bobolink, is here ;  
Half-hid in tip-top apple-blooms he swings,  
Or climbs against the breeze with quiverin'  
wings,

Or, givin' way to 't in a mock despair,  
Runs down, a brook o' laughter, thru the  
air.

I ollus feel the sap start in my veins  
In Spring, with curus heats an' prickly  
pains,

Thet drive me, when I git a chance, to  
walk

Off by myself to hev a privit talk  
With a queer critter thet can't seem to  
'gree

Along o' me like most folks, — Mister  
Me.

Ther' 's times when I 'm unsoshle ez a stone,  
An' sort o' suffocate to be alone, —  
I 'm crowded jes' to think thet folks are  
nigh,

An' can't bear nothin' closer than the  
sky ;

Now the wind 's full ez shifty in the mind  
Ez wut it is ou'-doors, ef I ain't blind,  
An' sometimes, in the fairest sou'west  
weather,

My innard vane pints east for weeks to-  
gether,

My natur' gits all goose-flesh, an' my sins  
Come drizzlin' on my conscience sharp ez  
pins :

Wal, et sech times I jes' slip out o' sight  
An' take it out in a fair stan'-up fight  
With the one cuss I can't lay on the shelf,  
The crook'dest stick in all the heap, — My-  
self.

'T wuz so las' Sabbath arter meetin'-time :  
Findin' my feelin's would n't noways rhyme  
With nobody's, but off the hendle flew  
An' took things from an east-wind pint o'  
view,

I started off to lose me in the hills  
Where the pines be, up back o' 'Siah's  
Mills :

Pines, ef you're blue, are the best friends  
I know,

They mope an' sigh an' sheer your feelin's  
so, —

They hesh the ground beneath so, tu, I  
swan,

You half-forgit you've gut a body on.  
Ther' 's a small school'us there where four  
roads meet,

The door-steps hollered out by little feet,  
An' side-posts carved with names whose  
owners grew

To gret men, some on 'em, an' deacons, tu ;  
'tain't used no longer, coz the town hez gut  
A high-school, where they teach the Lord  
knows wut :

Three-story larnin' 's pop'lar now ; I guess  
We thriv' ez wal on jes' two stories less,  
For it strikes me ther' 's sech a thing ez  
sinnin'

By overloadin' children's underpinnin' :  
Wal, here it wuz I larned my A B C,  
An' it 's a kind o' favorite spot with me.

We're curus critters : Now ain't jes' the  
minute

Thet ever fits us easy while we're in it ;  
Long ez 't wuz futur', 't would be perfect  
bliss, —

Soon ez it's past, thet time's wuth ten o'  
this ;

An' yit there ain't a man thet need be told  
Thet Now's the only bird lays eggs o' gold.  
A knee-high lad, I used to plot an' plan  
An' think 't wuz life's cap-sheaf to be a  
man ;



Now, gittin' gray, there's nothin' I enjoy  
Like dreamin' back along into a boy :  
So the ole school'us is a place I choose  
Afore all others, ef I want to muse ;  
I set down where I used to set, an' git  
My boyhood back, an' better things with  
it,—

Faith, Hope, an' sunthin', ef it is n't Cher-  
rity,

It's want o' guile, an' thet's ez gret a rer-  
rity,—

While Fancy's cushin', free to Prince and  
Clown,

Makes the hard bench ez soft ez milk-  
weed-down.

Now, 'fore I knowed, thet Sabbath arter-  
noon

When I sot out to tramp myself in tune,  
I found me in the school'us' on my seat,  
Drummin' the march to No-wheres with my  
feet.

Thinkin' o' nothin', I've heerd ole folks  
say

Is a hard kind o' dooty in its way:  
It's thinkin' everythin' you ever knew,  
Or ever hearn, to make your feelin's blue.

I sot there tryin' thet on for a spell :  
I thought o' the Rebellion, then o' Hell,  
Which some folks tell ye now is jest a met-  
terfor

(A the'ry, p'raps, it wun't *feel* none the  
better for);

I thought o' Reconstruction, wut we'd win  
Patchin' our patent self-blow-up agin :  
I thought ef this 'ere milkin' o' the wits,  
So much a month, warn't givin' Natur'  
fits,—

Ef folks warn't druv, findin' their own milk  
fail,

To work the cow thet hez an iron tail,  
An' ef idees 'thout ripenin' in the pan  
Would send up cream to humor ary man :  
From this to thet I let my worryin' creep,  
Till finally I must ha' fell asleep.

Our lives in sleep are some like streams  
thet glide

'twixt flesh an' sperrit boundin' on each side,  
Where both shores' shadders kind o' mix  
an' mingle

In sunthin' thet ain't jes' like either sin-  
gle;

An' when you cast off moorin's from To-  
day,

An' down towards To-morrer drift away,  
The imiges thet tingle on the stream  
Make a new upside-down'ard world o'  
dream :

Sometimes they seem like sunrise-streaks  
an' warnin's

O' wut 'll be in Heaven on Sabbath-morn-  
in's,

An', mixed right in ez ef jest out o' spite,  
Sunthin' thet says your supper ain't gone  
right.

I 'm gret on dreams, an' often when I  
wake,

I've lived so much it makes my mem'ry  
ache,

An' can't skurree take a cat-nap in my  
cheer

'thout hevin' 'em, some good, some bad, all  
queer.

Now I wuz settin' where I 'd ben, it  
seemed,

An' ain't sure yit whether I r'ally dreamed,  
Nor, ef I did, how long I might ha' slep',  
When I hearn some un stompin' up the  
step,

An' lookin' round, ef two an' two make four,  
I see a Pilgrim Father in the door.

He wore a steeple-hat, tall boots, an' spurs  
With rowels to 'em big ez ches'nut-burrs,  
An' his gret sword behind him sloped away  
Long 'z a man's speech thet dunno wut to  
say.—

"Ef your name's Biglow, an' your given-  
name

Hosee," sez he, "it's arter you I came;  
I 'm your gret-gran'ther multiplied by  
three."—

"My *wut?*" sez I. — "Your gret-gret-  
gret," sez he:

"You would n't ha' never ben here but for  
me.

Two hundred an' three year ago this May  
The ship I come in sailed up Boston Bay;  
I 'd been a cunnle in our Civil War, —  
But wut on airth hev *you* gut up one for?  
Coz we du things in England, 't ain't for  
you

To git a notion you can du 'em tu:

I 'm told you write in public prints: ef  
true,

It's nateral you should know a thing or  
two."—

"Thet air 's an argymunt I can't en-  
dorse,—

't would prove, coz you wear spurs, you  
kep' a horse:

For brains," sez I, "wutever you may  
think,  
Ain't boun' to cash the drafs o' pen-an'-  
ink, —

Though mos' folks write ez ef they hoped  
jes' quickenin'

The churn would argoo skim-milk into  
thickenin' ;

But skim-milk ain't a thing to change its  
view

O' wut it's meant for more 'n a smoky  
flue.

But du pray tell me, 'fore we further go,  
How in all Natur' did you come to know  
'bout our affairs," sez I, "in Kingdom-  
Come ?" —

"Wal, I worked round at sperrit-rappin'  
some,

An' danced the tables till their legs wuz  
gone,

In hopes o' larnin' wut wuz goin' on,"

Sez he, "but mejums lie so like all-split  
Thet I concluded it wuz best to quit.

But, come now, ef you wun't confess to  
knowin',

You 've some conjectures how the thing's  
a-goin'." —

"Gran'ther," sez I, "a vane warn't never  
known

Nor asked to hev a jedgment of its own;

An' yit, ef 't ain't gut rusty in the jints,

It's safe to trust its say on certin pints:

It knows the wind's opinions to a T,

An' the wind settles wut the weather 'll be."

"I never thought a scion of our stock

Could grow the wood to make a weather-  
cock;

When I wuz younger 'n you, skurree more  
'n a shaver,

No airthly wind," sez he, "could make me  
waver!"

(Ez he said this, he clinched his jaw an'  
forehead,

Hitchin' his belt to bring his sword-hilt  
forrard.) —

"Jes so it wuz with me," sez I, "I swow,  
When I wuz younger 'n wut you see me  
now, —

Nothin' from Adam's fall to Huldy's bon-  
net,

Thet I warn't full-cocked with my jedg-  
ment on it;

But now I 'm gittin' on in life, I find

It's a sight harder to make up my mind, —  
Nor I don't often try tu, when events  
Will du it for me free of all expense.

The moral question's ollus plain enough, —  
It's jes' the human-natur' side thet's  
tough;

Wut's best to think may n't puzzle me nor  
you, —

The pinch comes in decidin' wut to *du* ;

Ef you *read* History, all runs smooth ez  
grease,

Coz there the men ain't nothin' more 'n  
ideas, —

But come to *make* it, ez we must to-day,

Th' ideas hev arms an' legs an' stop the  
way:

It's easy fixin' things in facts an' figgers, —  
They can't resist, nor warn't brought up  
with niggers;

But come to try your the'ry on, — why,  
then

Your facts an' figgers change to ign'ant  
men

Actin' ez ugly — " — "Smite 'em hip an'  
thigh!"

Sez gran'ther, "and let every man-child  
die!

Oh for three weeks o' Crommle an' the  
Lord!

Up, Isr'el, to your tents an' grind the  
sword!" —

"Thet kind o' thing worked wal in ole  
Judee,

But you forgit how long it's ben A. D.;

You think thet 's ellerkence, — I call it  
shoddy,

A thing," sez I, "wun't cover soul nor  
body;

I like the plain all-wool o' common-sense,  
Thet warms ye now, an' will a twelve-  
month hence.

You took to follerin' where the Prophets  
beckoned,

An', fust you knowed on, back come Charles  
the Second;

Now wut I want 's to hev all *we* gain  
stick,

An' not to start Millennium too quick;

We hain't to punish only, but to keep,

An' the cure 's gut to go a cent'ry deep."

"Wall, milk-an'-water ain't the best o'  
glue,"

Sez he, "an' so you'll find afore you're  
thru;

Ef reshness venters sunthin', shilly-shally

Loses ez often wut 's ten times the vally.  
Thet exe of ourn, when Charles's neck gut  
split,

Opened a gap thet ain't bridged over yit:  
Slav'ry 's your Charles, the Lord hez gin  
the exe" —

"Our Charles," sez I, "hez gut eight mil-  
lion necks.

The hardest question ain't the black man's  
right,

The trouble is to 'mancipate the white ;  
One 's chained in body an' can be sot free,  
But t' other 's chained in soul to an idee:  
It 's a long job, but we shall worry thru it;  
Ef bagnets fail, the spellin'-book must  
du it."

"Hosee," sez he, "I think you 're goin' to  
fail:

The rattlesnake ain't dangerous in the tail;  
This 'ere rebellion 's nothing but the ret-  
tle, —

You 'll stomp on thet an' think you 've won  
the bettle;

It 's Slavery thet 's the fangs an' thinkin'  
head,

An' ef you want selvation, cresh it dead, —  
An' cresh it suddin, or you 'll larn by  
waitin'

Thet Chance wun't stop to listen to de-  
batin' ! " —

"God's truth ! " sez I, — "an' ef I held the  
club,

An' knowed jes' where to strike, — but  
there 's the rub ! " —

"Strike soon," sez he, "or you 'll be deadly  
ailin', —

Folks thet 's afearod to fail are sure o'  
failin' ;

God hates your sneakin' creturs thet be-  
lieve

He 'll settle things they run away an'  
leave ! "

He brought his foot down fercely, ez he  
spoke,

An' give me sech a startle thet I woke.

#### No. VII

### LATEST VIEWS OF MR. BIGLOW

#### PRELIMINARY NOTE

[It is with feelings of the liveliest pain that we inform our readers of the death of the Reverend Homer Wilbur, A. M., which took place suddenly, by an apoplectic stroke, on the after-

noon of Christmas day, 1862. Our venerable friend (for so we may venture to call him, though we never enjoyed the high privilege of his personal acquaintance) was in his eighty-fourth year, having been born June 12, 1779, at Pigsgusset Precinct (now West Jerusha) in the then District of Maine. Graduated with distinction at Hubville College in 1805, he pursued his theological studies with the late Reverend Preserved Thacker, D. D., and was called to the charge of the First Society in Jaalam in 1809, where he remained till his death.

"As an antiquary he has probably left no superior, if, indeed, an equal," writes his friend and colleague, the Reverend Jeduthun Hitchcock, to whom we are indebted for the above facts; "in proof of which I need only allude to his 'History of Jaalam, Genealogical, Topographical, and Ecclesiastical,' 1849, which has won him an eminent and enduring place in our more solid and useful literature. It is only to be regretted that his intense application to historical studies should have so entirely withdrawn him from the pursuit of poetical composition, for which he was endowed by Nature with a remarkable aptitude. His well-known hymn, beginning 'With clouds of care encompassed round,' has been attributed in some collections to the late President Dwight, and it is hardly presumptuous to affirm that the simile of the rainbow in the eighth stanza would do no discredit to that polished pen."

We regret that we have not room at present for the whole of Mr. Hitchcock's exceedingly valuable communication. We hope to lay more liberal extracts from it before our readers at an early day. A summary of its contents will give some notion of its importance and interest. It contains: 1st, A biographical sketch of Mr. Wilbur, with notices of his predecessors in the pastoral office, and of eminent clerical contemporaries; 2d, An obituary of deceased, from the Punkin-Falls "Weekly Parallel;" 3d, A list of his printed and manuscript productions and of projected works; 4th, Personal anecdotes and recollections, with specimens of table-talk; 5th, A tribute to his relict, Mrs. Dorcas (Pilecox) Wilbur; 6th, A list of graduates fitted for different colleges by Mr. Wilbur, with biographical memoranda touching the more distinguished; 7th, Concerning learned, charitable, and other societies, of which Mr. Wilbur was a member, and of those with which, had his life been prolonged, he would doubtless have been associated, with a complete catalogue of such Americans as have been Fellows of the Royal Society; 8th, A brief summary of Mr. Wilbur's latest conclusions concerning the Tenth Horn of the Beast in its special application to recent events, for which the public, as Mr. Hitchcock assures us, have been waiting with feelings of lively anticipation; 9th, Mr. Hitchcock's own views on the same topic; and, 10th, A brief essay on the importance of local histories. It will be apparent that the duty of preparing Mr. Wilbur's biography could not have fallen into more sympathetic hands.

In a private letter with which the reverend gentleman has since favored us, he expresses the opinion that Mr. Wilbur's life was shortened by our unhappy civil war. It disturbed his studies, dislocated all his habitual associations and trains of thought, and unsettled the foundations of a faith, rather the result of habit than conviction, in the capacity of man for self-government. "Such has been the felicity of my life," he said to Mr. Hitchcock, on the very morning of the day he died, "that, through the divine mercy, I could always say, *Summum nec metuo diem, nec opto*. It has been my habit, as you know, on every recurrence of this blessed anniversary, to read Milton's 'Hymn of the Nativity' till its sublime harmonies so dilated my soul and quickened its spiritual sense that I seemed to hear that other song which gave assurance to the shepherds that there was One who would lead them also in green pastures and beside the still waters. But to-day I have been unable to think of anything but that mournful text, 'I came not to send peace, but a sword,' and, did it not smack of Pagan presumptuousness, could almost wish I had never lived to see this day."

Mr. Hitchcock also informs us that his friend "lies buried in the Jaalam graveyard, under a large red-cedar which he specially admired. A neat and substantial monument is to be erected over his remains, with a Latin epitaph written by himself; for he was accustomed to say, pleasantly, 'that there was at least one occasion in a scholar's life when he might show the advantages of a classical training.'"

The following fragment of a letter addressed to us, and apparently intended to accompany Mr. Biglow's contribution to the present number, was found upon his table after his decease. — EDITORS ATLANTIC MONTHLY.]

TO THE EDITORS OF THE ATLANTIC  
MONTHLY

JAALAM, 24th Dec., 1862.

RESPECTED SIRS, — The infirm state of my bodily health would be a sufficient apology for not taking up the pen at this time, wholesome as I deem it for the mind to apicrate in the shelter of epistolary confidence, were it not that a considerable, I might even say a large, number of individuals in this parish expect from their pastor some publick expression of sentiment at this crisis. Moreover, *Qui tacitus ardet magis uritur*. In trying times like these, the besetting sin of undisciplined minds is to seek refuge from inexplicable realities in the dangerous stimulant of angry partisanship or the indolent narcotick of vague and hopeful vaticination: *fortunamque suo temperat arbitrio*. Both by reason of my age

and my natural temperament, I am unfitted for either. Unable to penetrate the inscrutable judgments of God, I am more than ever thankful that my life has been prolonged till I could in some small measure comprehend His mercy. As there is no man who does not at some time render himself amenable to the one, — *quum vix justus sit securus*, — so there is none that does not feel himself in daily need of the other.

I confess I cannot feel, as some do, a personal consolation for the manifest evils of this war in any remote or contingent advantages that may spring from it. I am old and weak, I can bear little, and can scarce hope to see better days; nor is it any adequate compensation to know that Nature is young and strong and can bear much. Old men philosophize over the past, but the present is only a burthen and a weariness. The one lies before them like a placid evening landscape; the other is full of the vexations and anxieties of house-keeping. It may be true enough that *misceat hæc illis, prohibetque Clotho fortunam stare*, but he who said it was fain at last to call in Atropos with her shears before her time; and I cannot help selfishly mourning that the fortune of our Republick could not at least stay till my days were numbered.

Tibullus would find the origin of wars in the great exaggeration of riches, and does not stick to say that in the days of the beechen trencher there was peace. But averse as I am by nature from all wars, the more as they have been especially fatal to libraries, I would have this one go on till we are reduced to wooden platters again, rather than surrender the principle to defend which it was undertaken. Though I believe Slavery to have been the cause of it, by so thoroughly demoralizing Northern politicks for its own purposes as to give opportunity and hope to treason, yet I would not have our thought and purpose diverted from their true object, — the maintenance of the idea of Government. We are not merely suppressing an enormous riot, but contending for the possibility of permanent order coexisting with democratical fickleness; and while I would not superstitiously venerate form to the sacrifice of substance, neither would I forget that an adherence to precedent and prescription can alone give



that continuity and coherence under a democratical constitution which are inherent in the person of a despotick monarch and the selfishness of an aristocratical class. *Stet pro ratione voluntas* is as dangerous in a majority as in a tyrant.

I cannot allow the present production of my young friend to go out without a protest from me against a certain extremeness in his views, more pardonable in the poet than in the philosopher. While I agree with him, that the only cure for rebellion is suppression by force, yet I must animadvert upon certain phrases where I seem to see a coincidence with a popular fallacy on the subject of compromise. On the one hand there are those who do not see that the vital principle of Government and the seminal principle of Law cannot properly be made a subject of compromise at all, and on the other those who are equally blind to the truth that without a compromise of individual opinions, interests, and even rights, no society would be possible. *In medio tutissimus*. For my own part, I would gladly —

EF I a song or two could make  
Like rockets druv by their own burnin',  
All leap an' light, to leave a wake  
Men's hearts an' faces skyward turn-  
in'! —

But, it strikes me, 't ain't jest the time  
Fer stringin' words with settisfaction:  
Wut 's wanted now 's the silent rhyme  
'Twixt upright Will an' downright Ac-  
tion.

Words, ef you keep 'em, pay their keep,  
But gabble 's the short cut to ruin;  
It 's gratis, (gals half-price,) but cheap  
At no rate, ef it henders doin';  
Ther 's nothin' wuss, 'less 't is to set  
A martyr-prem'um upon jawrin':  
Teapots git dangerous, ef you shet  
Their lids down on 'em with Fort War-  
ren.

'Bout long enough it 's ben discussed  
Who sot the magazine afire,  
An' whether, ef Bob Wickliffe bust,  
'T would scare us more or blow us  
higher.  
D' ye s'pose the Gret Foreseer's plan  
Wuz settled fer him in town-meetin'?

Or thet ther 'd ben no Fall o' Man,  
Ef Adam 'd on'y bit a sweetin'?

Oh, Jon'than, ef you want to be  
A rugged chap agin an' hearty,  
Go fer wutever 'll hurt Jeff D.,  
Nut wut 'll boost up ary party.  
Here 's hell broke loose, an' we lay flat  
With half the univarse a-singein',  
Till Sen'tor This an' Gov'nor Thet  
Stop squabblin' fer the garding-ingin.

It 's war we 're in, not politics;  
It 's systems wrastlin' now, not parties;  
An' victory in the eend 'll fix  
Where longest will an' truest heart is.  
An' wut 's the Guv'ment folks about?  
Tryin' to hope ther 's nothin' doin',  
An' look ez though they did n't doubt  
Sunthin' pertickler wuz a-brewin'.

Ther 's critters yit thet talk an' act  
Fer wut they call Conciliation;  
They 'd hand a buff'lo-drove a tract  
When they wuz madder than all Ba-  
shan.

Conciliate? it jest means *be kicked*,  
No metter how they phrase an' tone it;  
It means thet we 're to set down licked,  
Thet we 're poor shotes an' glad to own  
it!

A war on tick 's ez dear 'z the deuce,  
But it wun't leave no lastin' traces,  
Ez 't would to make a sneakin' truce  
Without no moral specie-basis:  
Ef greenbacks ain't nut jest the cheese,  
I guess ther 's evils thet 's extremer, —  
Fer instance, — shiplaster idees  
Like them put out by Gov'nor Seymour.

Last year, the Nation, at a word,  
When tremblin' Freedom cried to shield  
her,  
Flamed weldin' into one keen sword  
Waitin' an' longin' fer a wielder:  
A splendid flash! — but how 'd the grasp  
With sech a chance ez thet wuz tally?  
Ther' warn't no meanin' in our clasp, —  
Half this, half thet, all shilly-shally.

More men? More Man! It 's there we  
fail;  
Weak plans grow weaker yit by length-  
enin':

Wut use in addin' to the tail,  
When it 's the head 's in den o' strength-  
enin' ?

We wanted one thet felt all Chief  
From roots o' hair to sole o' stockin',  
Square-sot with thousan'-ton belief  
In him an' us, ef earth went rockin' !

Ole Hick'ry would n't ha' stood see-saw  
'Bout doin' things till they wuz done  
with, —

He 'd smashed the tables o' the Law  
In time o' need to load his gun with;  
He could n't see but jest one side, —  
Ef his, 't wuz God's, an' thet wuz plenty ;  
An' so his "*Forrards !*" multiplied  
An army's fightin' weight by twenty.

But this 'ere histin', creak, creak, creak,  
Your cappen's heart up with a derrick,  
This tryin' to coax a lightnin'-streak  
Out of a half-discouraged hay-rick,  
This hangin' on mont' arter mont'  
Fer one sharp purpose 'mongst the  
twitter, —

I tell ye, it doos kind o' stunt  
The peth and sperit of a critter.

In six months where 'll the People be,  
Ef leaders look on revolution  
Ez though it wuz a cup o' tea, —  
Jest social el'ments in solution ?  
This weighin' things doos wal enough  
When war cools down, an' comes to  
writin' ;

But while it 's makin', the true stuff  
Is pison-mad, pig-headed fightin'.

Democ'acy gives every man  
The right to be his own oppressor ;  
But a loose Gov'ment ain't the plan,  
Helpless ez spilled beans on a dresser :  
I tell ye one thing we might larn  
From them smart critters, the Seeced-  
ers, —

Ef bein' right 's the fust consarn,  
The 'fore-the-fust 's cast-iron leaders.

But 'pears to me I see some signs  
Thet we 're a-goin' to use our senses :  
Jeff druv us into these hard lines,  
An' ough' to bear his half th' expenses ;  
Slavery 's Secession's heart an' will,  
South, North, East, West, where'er you  
find it,

An' ef it drors into War's mill,  
D' ye say them thunder-stones sha'n't  
grind it ?

D' ye s'pose, ef Jeff giv *him* a lick,  
Ole Hick'ry 'd tried his head to sof'n  
So 's 't would n't hurt thet ebony stick  
Thet 's made our side see stars so of'n ?  
"No !" he 'd ha' thundered, "on your  
knees,  
An' own one flag, one road to glory !  
Soft-heartedness, in times like these,  
Shows sof'ness in the upper story !"

An' why should we kick up a muss  
About the Pres'dunt's proclamation ?  
It ain't a-goin' to lib'rate us,  
Ef we don't like emancipation :  
The right to be a cussed fool  
Is safe from all devices human,  
It 's common (ez a gin'l rule)  
To every critter born o' woman.

So we 're all right, an' I, fer one,  
Don't think our cause 'll lose in vally  
By rammin' Scriptur' in our gun,  
An' gittin' Natur' fer an ally :  
Thank God, say I, fer even a plan  
To lift one human bein's level,  
Give one more chance to make a man,  
Or, anyhow, to spile a devil !

Not thet I 'm one thet much expec'  
Millennium by express to-morrer ;  
They *will* miscarry, — I rec'lec'  
Tu many on 'em, to my sorrer :  
Men ain't made angels in a day,  
No matter how you mould an' labor  
'em,  
Nor 'riginal ones, I guess, don't stay  
With Abe so of'n ez with Abraham.

The'ry thinks Fact a pooty thing,  
An' wants the banns read right en-  
suin' ;  
But fact wun't noways wear the ring,  
'Thout years o' settin' up an' wooin' :  
Though, arter all, Time's dial-plate  
Marks cent'ries with the minute-finger,  
An' Good can't never come tu late,  
Though it doos seem to try an' linger.

An' come wut will, I think it 's grand  
Abe 's gut his will et last bloom-fur-  
naced

In trial-flames till it'll stand

The strain o' bein' in deadly earnest :  
Thet's wut we want, — we want to know  
The folks on our side hez the bravery  
To b'lieve ez hard, come weal, come woe,  
In Freedom ez Jeff doos in Slavery.

Set the two forces foot to foot,  
An' every man knows who'll be winner,  
Whose faith in God hez ary root  
Thet goes down deeper than his dinner:  
*Then* 't will be felt from pole to pole,  
Without no need o' proclamation,  
Earth's biggest Country's gut her soul  
An' risen up Earth's Greatest Nation !

#### No. VIII

### KETTELOPOTOMACHIA

#### PRELIMINARY NOTE

[In the month of February, 1866, the editors of the "Atlantic Monthly" received from the Rev. Mr. Hitchcock of Jaalam a letter enclosing the macaronic verses which follow, and promising to send more, if more should be communicated. "They were rapped out on the evening of Thursday last past," he says, "by what claimed to be the spirit of my late predecessor in the ministry here, the Rev. Dr. Wilbur, through the medium of a young man at present domiciled in my family. As to the possibility of such spiritual manifestations, or whether they be properly so entitled, I express no opinion, as there is a division of sentiment on that subject in the parish, and many persons of the highest respectability in social standing entertain opposing views. The young man who was improved as a medium submitted himself to the experiment with manifest reluctance, and is still unprepared to believe in the authenticity of the manifestations. During his residence with me his deportment has always been exemplary; he has been constant in his attendance upon our family devotions and the public ministrations of the Word, and has more than once privately stated to me, that the latter had often brought him under deep concern of mind. The table is an ordinary quadrupedal one, weighing about thirty pounds, three feet seven inches and a half in height, four feet square on the top, and of beech or maple, I am not definitely prepared to say which. It had once belonged to my respected predecessor, and had been, so far as I can learn upon careful inquiry, of perfectly regular

and correct habits up to the evening in question. On that occasion the young man previously alluded to had been sitting with his hands resting carelessly upon it, while I read over to him at his request certain portions of my last Sabbath's discourse. On a sudden the rappings, as they are called, commenced to render themselves audible, at first faintly, but in process of time more distinctly and with violent agitation of the table. The young man expressed himself both surprised and pained by the wholly unexpected, and, so far as he was concerned, unprecedented occurrence. At the earnest solicitation, however, of several who happened to be present, he consented to go on with the experiment, and with the assistance of the alphabet commonly employed in similar emergencies, the following communication was obtained and written down immediately by myself. Whether any, and if so, how much weight should be attached to it, I venture no decision. That Dr. Wilbur had sometimes employed his leisure in Latin versification I have ascertained to be the case, though all that has been discovered of that nature among his papers consists of some fragmentary passages of a version into hexameters of portions of the Song of Solomon. These I had communicated about a week or ten days previous[ly] to the young gentleman who officiated as medium in the communication afterwards received. I have thus, I believe, stated all the material facts that have any elucidative bearing upon this mysterious occurrence."

So far Mr. Hitchcock, who seems perfectly master of Webster's unabridged quarto, and whose flowing style leads him into certain further expatiations for which we have not room. We have since learned that the young man he speaks of was a sophomore, put under his care during a sentence of rustication from — College, where he had distinguished himself rather by physical experiments on the comparative power of resistance in window-glass to various solid substances, than in the more regular studies of the place. In answer to a letter of inquiry, the professor of Latin says, "There was no harm in the boy that I know of beyond his loving mischief more than Latin, nor can I think of any spirits likely to possess him except those commonly called animal. He was certainly not remarkable for his Latinity, but I see nothing in the verses you enclose that would lead me to think them beyond his capacity, or the result of any special inspiration whether of beech or maple. Had that of *birch* been tried upon him earlier and more faithfully, the verses would perhaps have been better in quality and certainly in quantity." This exact and thorough scholar then goes on to point out many false quantities and

barbarisms. It is but fair to say, however, that the author, whoever he was, seems not to have been unaware of some of them himself, as is shown by a great many notes appended to the verses as we received them, and purporting to be by Scaliger, Bentley, and others, — among them the *Esprit de Voltaire*! These we have omitted as clearly meant to be humorous and altogether failing therein.

Though entirely satisfied that the verses are altogether unworthy of Mr. Wilbur, who seems to have been a tolerable Latin scholar after the fashion of his day, yet we have determined to print them here, partly as belonging to the *res gestæ* of this collection, and partly as a warning to their putative author which may keep him from such indecorous pranks for the future.

### KETTELOPOTOMACHIA

P. Ovidii Nasonis carmen heroicum macaronicum perplexametrum, inter Getas getico more compositum, denuo per medium ardentispiritualium adjuvante mensâ diabolice obsessâ, recuperatum, curâque Jo. Conradi Schwarzii umbrae, aliis necnon plurimis adjuvantibus, restitutum.

#### LIBER I.

PUNCTORUM garretos colens et cellara  
Quinque,

Gutteribus quæ et gaudes sundayam abstingere frontem,

Plerumque insidos solita fluitare liquore

Tanglepedem quem homines appellant Di quoque rotgut,

Pimpliidis, rubicundaque, Musa, O, bourbonolensque, 5

Fenianas rixas procul, alma, brogipotentis  
Patricii cyathos iterantis et horrida bella,  
Backos dum virides viridis Brigitta remittit,

Linquens, eximios celebrem, da, Virginieneses  
Rowdes, præcipue et Te, heros alte, Polar-  
de! 10

Insignes juvenesque, illo certamine lietos,  
Colemane, Tylere, nec vos oblivione relin-  
quam.

Ampla aquilæ invictæ fausto est sub teg-  
mine terra,

Backyfer, ooiskeo pollens, ebenuque bi-  
pede,

Socors præsidum et atrix (denique quidru-  
minantium), 15

Duplefveorum uberrima; illis et integre  
cordi est

Deplere assidue et sine proprio incommodo  
fiscum;

Nunc etiam placidum hoc opus invictique  
secuti,

Goosam aureos ni eggos voluissent immo  
necare

Quæ peperit, saltem ac de illis meliora me-  
rentem. 20

Condidit hanc Smithius Dux, Captinus  
inelytus ille

Regis Ulyssæ instar, docti arcum intendere  
longum;

Condidit ille Johnsmith, Virginiamque vo-  
cavit,

Settledit autem Jacobus rex, nomine pri-  
mus,

Rascalis implens ruptis, blagardisque de-  
boshtis, 25

Militibusque ex Falstaffi legione fugatis

Wenchisque illi quas poterant seducere  
nuptas;

Virgineum, ah, littus matronis talibus im-  
par!

Progeniem stirpe ex hoc non sine stigmate  
ducunt

Multi sese qui jactant regum esse nepotes:  
Haud omnes, Mater, genitos quæ nuper  
habebas 31

Bello fortes, consilio cantos, virtute decoros,  
Jamque et habes, sparso si patrio in san-  
guine virtus,

Mostrabisque iterum, antiquis sub astris  
reducta!

De illis qui upkikitant, dicebam, rumpora  
tanta, 35

Letcheris et Floydis magnisque Extra or-  
dine Billis;

Est his prisca fides jurare et breakere wor-  
dum;

Poppere fellerum a tergo, aut stickere clam  
bowknife,

Haud sane facinus, dignum sed victrice  
lauro;

Larrupere et nigerum, factum præstantius  
ullo: 40

Ast chlamydem piciplumatam, Ieariam,  
flito et ineptam,

Yanko gratis induere, illum et valido railo  
Insuper acri equitare docere est hospitio uti.

Nescio an ille Polardus duplefveoribus  
ortus,

Sed reputo potius de radice poorwiteman-  
orum; 45



Fortuiti proles, ni fallor, Tylerus erat  
Præsidis, omnibus ab Whiggis nominatus a  
poor cuss ;

Et nobilem tertium evincit venerabile no-  
men.

Ast animos omnes bellique ad tympana ha !  
ha !

Vociferant læti, procul et si prælia, sive <sup>50</sup>  
Hostem incautum atsito possint shootere  
salvi ;

Imperiique capaces, esset si stylus agmen,  
Pro dulci spoliabant et sine dangere fito.

Præ ceterisque Polardus : si Secessia lieta,  
Se nunquam lieturum jurat, res et unheard-  
of, <sup>55</sup>

Verbo hæsit, similisque audaci roosteri in-  
victo,

Dunghilli solitus rex pullos whoppere  
molles,

Grantum, hirelingos stripes quique et splen-  
dida tollunt

Sidera, et Yankos, territum et omnem sars-  
uit orbem.

Usque dabant operam isti omnes, noctes-  
que diesque, <sup>60</sup>

Samuelem demulgere avunculum, id vero  
siccum ;

Uberibus sed ejus, et horum est culpa, re-  
motis,

Parvam domi vaccam, nec mora minima,  
quærent,

Lacticarentem autem et droppam vix in die  
dantem ;

Reddite avunculi, et exclamabant, reddite  
pappam ! <sup>65</sup>

Polko ut consule, gemens, Billy immur-  
murat Extra ;

Echo respondit, thesauro ex vacuo, pap-  
pam !

Frustra explorant pocketa, ruber nare re-  
pertum ;

Officia expulsi aspiciunt rapta, et Para-  
disum

Oculusum, viridesque haud illis nascere  
backos ; <sup>70</sup>

Stupent tunc oculis madidis spittantque si-  
lenter.

Adhibere usu ast longo vires prorsus in-  
epti,

Si non ut qui grindeat axve trabemve re-  
uolvat,

Virginiam excruciant totis nunc mightibu'  
matrem ;

Non melius, puta, nono panis dimidiumne  
est ? <sup>75</sup>

Readere ibi non posse est casus commoner  
ullo ;

Tanto intentius imprimere est opus ergo  
statuta ;

Nemo propterea pejor, melior, sine doubtò,  
Obtineat qui contractum, si et postea rhino ;

Ergo Polardus, si quis, inexsuperabilis he-  
ros, <sup>80</sup>

Colemanus impavidus nondum, atque in  
purpure natus

Tylerus Iohanides celerisque in fito Na-  
thaniel,

Quisque optans digitos in tantum stickere  
pium,

Adstant accincti imprimere aut perrumpere  
leges :

Quales os miserum rabidi tres ægre mo-  
lossi, <sup>85</sup>

Quales aut dubium textum atra in veste  
ministri,

Tales circumstabant nunc nostri inopes hoc  
job.

Hisque Polardus voce canoro talia fatus:  
Primum autem, veluti est mos, præceps

quisque liquorat,  
Quisque et Nicotianum ingens quid inserit  
atrum, <sup>90</sup>

Heroûm nitidum decus et solamen avi-  
tum,

Masticat ac simul altisonans, spittatque  
profuse :

Quis de Virginia meruit præstantius un-  
quam ?

Quis se pro patria curavit impigre tu-  
tum ?

Speechisque articulisque hominum quis for-  
tior ullus, <sup>95</sup>

Ingeminans pennæ lickos et vulnera vo-  
cis ?

Quisnam putidius (hic) sarsuit Yankinimi-  
cos,

Sæpius aut dedit ultro datam et broke his  
parolam ?

Mente inquassatus solidâque, tyranno mi-  
nante,

Horrisonis (hic) bombis mœnia et alta qua-  
tente, <sup>100</sup>

Sese promptum (hic) jactans Yankos lickere  
centum,

Atque ad lastum invictus non surrendidit  
unquam ?

Ergo haud meddlite, posco, mique relinquit  
(hic) hoc job,

Si non — knifumque enormem monstrat spit-  
tatque tremendus.

Dixerat: ast alii reliquorant et sine  
 pauso 105  
 Pluggos incumbunt maxillis, uterque vicis-  
 sim  
 Certamine innocuo valde madidam inquinat  
 assem:  
 Tylerus autem, dumque liquorat aridus  
 hostis,  
 Mirum aspicit duplumque bibentem, astante  
 Lyæo;  
 Ardens inpavidusque edidit tamen impia  
 verba; 110  
 Duplum quamvis te aspicio, esses atque  
 viginti,  
 Mendacem dicerem totumque (hic) thrash-  
 erem acervum;  
 Nempe et thrasham, doggonatus (hic) sim  
 nisi faxem;  
 Lambastabo omnes catawompositer-(hic)  
 que chawam!  
 Dixit et impulsus Ryeo ruitur bene ti-  
 tus, 115  
 Illi nam gravidum caput et laterem habet  
 in hatto.  
 Hunc inhiat titubansque Polardus, optat  
 et illum  
 Stickere inermem, protegit autem rite  
 Lyæus,  
 Et pronos geminos, oculis dubitantibus, he-  
 ros  
 Cernit et irritus hostes, dumque excogitat  
 utrum 120  
 Primum inpitchere, corrui, inter utrosque  
 recumbit,  
 Magno asino similis nimio sub pondere quas-  
 sus:  
 Colemanus hos mæstus, triste ruminansque  
 solamen,  
 Inspicit hieicans, circumspittat terque cu-  
 bantes;  
 Funereisque his ritibus humidis inde solu-  
 tis, 125  
 Sternitur, invalidusque illis superincidit in-  
 fans;  
 Hos sepelit somnus et snorunt cornisonan-  
 tes,  
 Watchmanus inscios ast calybooso deinde  
 reponit.

## No. IX

[THE Editors of the "Atlantic" have received so many letters of inquiry concerning the literary remains of the late Mr. Wilbur, mentioned by his colleague and successor, Rev.

Jeduthun Hitchcock, in a communication from which we made some extracts in our number for February, 1863, and have been so repeatedly urged to print some part of them for the gratification of the public, that they felt it their duty at least to make some effort to satisfy so urgent a demand. They have accordingly carefully examined the papers intrusted to them, but find most of the productions of Mr. Wilbur's pen so fragmentary, and even chaotic, written as they are on the backs of letters in an exceedingly cramped chirography, — here a memorandum for a sermon; there an observation of the weather; now the measurement of an extraordinary head of cabbage, and then of the cerebral capacity of some reverend brother deceased; a calm inquiry into the state of modern literature, ending in a method of detecting if milk be impoverished with water, and the amount thereof; one leaf beginning with a genealogy, to be interrupted halfway down with an entry that the brindle cow had calved, — that any attempts at selection seemed desperate. His only complete work, "An Enquiry concerning the Tenth Horn of the Beast," even in the abstract of it given by Mr. Hitchcock, would, by a rough computation of the printers, fill five entire numbers of our journal, and as he attempts, by a new application of decimal fractions, to identify it with the Emperor Julian, seems hardly of immediate concern to the general reader. Even the Table Talk, though doubtless originally highly interesting in the domestic circle, is so largely made up of theological discussion and matters of local or preterite interest, that we have found it hard to extract anything that would at all satisfy expectation. But, in order to silence further inquiry, we subjoin a few passages as illustration of its general character.]

I think I could go near to be a perfect Christian if I were always a visitor, as I have sometimes been, at the house of some hospitable friend. I can show a great deal of self-denial where the best of everything is urged upon me with kindly importunity. It is not so very hard to turn the other cheek for a kiss. And when I meditate upon the pains taken for our entertainment in this life, on the endless variety of seasons, of human character and fortune, on the costliness of the hangings and furniture of our dwelling here, I sometimes feel a singular joy in looking upon myself as God's guest, and cannot but believe that we should all be wiser and happier, because more grateful, if we were always mindful of our privilege in this regard. And should we not rate more cheaply any honor that men could pay us, if we remembered that every day we sat at the table of the Great King? Yet must we not forget that we are in strictest bonds His servants also; for there is no impiety so abject as that which expects to be *dead-headed* (*ut ita dicam*) through life, and which, calling itself trust in Providence, is in reality asking Provi-

dence to trust us and taking up all our goods on false pretences. It is a wise rule to take the world as we find it, not always to leave it so.

It has often set me thinking when I find that I can always pick up plenty of empty nuts under my shagbark-tree. The squirrels know them by their lightness, and I have seldom seen one with the marks of their teeth in it. What a school-house is the world, if our wits would only not play truant! For I observe that men set most store by forms and symbols in proportion as they are mere shells. It is the outside they want and not the kernel. What stores of such do not many, who in material things are as shrewd as the squirrels, lay up for the spiritual winter-supply of themselves and their children! I have seen churches that seemed to me garners of these withered nuts, for it is wonderful how prosaic is the apprehension of symbols by the minds of most men. It is not one sect nor another, but all, who, like the dog of the fable, have let drop the spiritual substance of symbols for their material shadow. If one attribute miraculous virtues to mere holy water, that beautiful emblem of inward purification at the door of God's house, another cannot comprehend the significance of baptism without being ducked over head and ears in the liquid vehicle thereof.

[Perhaps a word of historical comment may be permitted here. My late revered predecessor was, I would humbly affirm, as free from prejudice as falls to the lot of the most highly favored individuals of our species. To be sure, I have heard him say that "what were called strong prejudices were in fact only the repulsion of sensitive organizations from that moral and even physical effluvium through which some natures by providential appointment, like certain unsavory quadrupeds, gave warning of their neighborhood. Better ten mistaken suspicions of this kind than one close encounter." This he said somewhat in heat, on being questioned as to his motives for always refusing his pulpit to those itinerant professors of vicarious benevolence who end their discourses by taking up a collection. But at another time I remember his saying, "that there was one large thing which small minds always found room for, and that was great prejudices." This, however, by the way. The statement which I purposed to make was simply this. Down to A. D. 1830, Jaalam had consisted of a single parish, with one house set apart for religious services. In that year the foundations of a Baptist Society were laid by the labors of Elder Joash Q. Balcom, 2d. As the members of the new body were drawn from the First Parish, Mr. Wilbur was for a time considerably exercised in mind. He even went so far as on one occasion to follow the reprehensible practice of the earlier Puritan

divines in choosing a punning text, and preached from Hebrews xiii. 9: "Be not carried about with *divers* and strange doctrines." He afterwards, in accordance with one of his own maxims, — "to get a dead injury out of the mind as soon as is decent, bury it, and then ventilate," — in accordance with this maxim, I say, he lived on very friendly terms with Rev. Shear-jashub Serimgour, present pastor of the Baptist Society in Jaalam. Yet I think it was never displeasing to him that the church edifice of that society (though otherwise a creditable specimen of architecture) remained without a bell, as indeed it does to this day. So much seemed necessary to do away with any appearance of acerbity toward a respectable community of professing Christians, which might be suspected in the conclusion of the above paragraph. — J. H.]

In lighter moods he was not averse from an innocent play upon words. Looking up from his newspaper one morning, as I entered his study, he said, "When I read a debate in Congress, I feel as if I were sitting at the feet of Zeno in the shadow of the Portico." On my expressing a natural surprise, he added, smiling, "Why, at such times the only view which honorable members give me of what goes on in the world is through their intercalumniations." I smiled at this after a moment's reflection, and he added gravely, "The most punctilious refinement of manners is the only salt that will keep a democracy from stinking; and what are we to expect from the people, if their representatives set them such lessons? Mr. Everett's whole life has been a sermon from this text. There was, at least, this advantage in duelling, that it set a certain limit on the tongue. When Society laid by the rapier, it buckled on the more subtle blade of etiquette wherewith to keep obtrusive vulgarity at bay." In this connection, I may be permitted to recall a playful remark of his upon another occasion. The painful divisions in the First Parish, A. D. 1844, occasioned by the wild notions in respect to the rights of (what Mr. Wilbur, so far as concerned the reasoning faculty, always called) the unfairer part of creation, put forth by Miss Parthenia Almira Fitz, are too well known to need more than a passing allusion. It was during these heats, long since happily allayed, that Mr. Wilbur remarked that "the Church had more trouble in dealing with one *sheresiarch* than with twenty *heresiarchs*," and that the men's *conscia recti*, or certainty of being right, was nothing to the women's.

When I once asked his opinion of a poetical composition on which I had expended no little pains, he read it attentively, and then remarked, "Unless one's thought pack more neatly in verse than in prose, it is wiser to



refrain. Commonplace gains nothing by being translated into rhyme, for it is something which no hocus-pocus can transubstantiate with the real presence of living thought. You entitle your piece, 'My Mother's Grave,' and expend four pages of useful paper in detailing your emotions there. But, my dear sir, watering does not improve the quality of ink, even though you should do it with tears. To publish a sorrow to Tom, Dick, and Harry is in some sort to advertise its unreality, for I have observed in my intercourse with the afflicted that the deepest grief instinctively hides its face with its hands and is silent. If your piece were printed, I have no doubt it would be popular, for people like to fancy that they feel much better than the trouble of feeling. I would put all poets on oath whether they have striven to say everything they possibly could think of, or to leave out all they could not help saying. In your own case, my worthy young friend, what you have written is merely a deliberate exercise, the gymnastic of sentiment. For your excellent maternal relative is still alive, and is to take tea with me this evening, D. V. Beware of simulated feeling; it is hypocrisy's first cousin; it is especially dangerous to a preacher; for he who says one day, 'Go to, let me seem to be pathetic,' may be nearer than he thinks to saying, 'Go to, let me seem to be virtuous, or earnest, or under sorrow for sin.' Depend upon it, Sappho loved her verses more sincerely than she did Phaon, and Petrarch his sonnets better than Laura, who was indeed but his poetical stalking-horse. After you shall have once heard that muffled rattle of clods on the coffin-lid of an irreparable loss, you will grow acquainted with a pathos that will make all elegies hateful. When I was of your age, I also for a time mistook my desire to write verses for an authentic call of my nature in that direction. But one day as I was going forth for a walk, with my head full of an 'Elegy on the Death of Flirtilla,' and vainly groping after a rhyme for *lily* that should not be *silly* or *chilly*, I saw my eldest boy Homer busy over the rain-water hogshead, in that childish experiment at parthenogenesis, the changing a horse-hair into a water-snake. An immersion of six weeks showed no change in the obstinate filament. Here was a stroke of unintended sarcasm. Had I not been doing in my study precisely what my boy was doing out of doors? Had my thoughts any more chance of coming to life by being submerged in rhyme than his hair by soaking in water? I burned my elegy and took a course of Edwards on the Will. People do not make poetry; it is made out of *them* by a process for which I do not find myself fitted. Nevertheless, the writing of verses

is a good rhetorical exercitation, as teaching us what to shun most carefully in prose. For prose bewitched is like window-glass with bubbles in it, distorting what it should show with pellucid veracity."

It is unwise to insist on doctrinal points as vital to religion. The Bread of Life is wholesome and sufficing in itself, but gulped down with these kickshaws cooked up by theologians, it is apt to produce an indigestion, nay, even at last an incurable dyspepsia of scepticism.

One of the most inexcusable weaknesses of Americans is in signing their names to what are called credentials. But for my interposition, a person who shall be nameless would have taken from this town a recommendation for an office of trust subscribed by the selectmen and all the voters of both parties, ascribing to him as many good qualities as if it had been his tombstone. The excuse was that it would be well for the town to be rid of him, as it would ere long be obliged to maintain him. I would not refuse my name to modest merit, but I would be as cautious as in signing a bond. [I trust I shall be subjected to no imputation of unbecoming vanity, if I mention the fact that Mr. W. indorsed my own qualifications as teacher of the high-school at Pequash Junction. J. H.] When I see a certificate of character with everybody's name to it, I regard it as a letter of introduction from the Devil. Never give a man your name unless you are willing to trust him with your reputation.

There seem nowadays to be two sources of literary inspiration, — fulness of mind and emptiness of pocket.

I am often struck, especially in reading Montaigne, with the obviousness and familiarity of a great writer's thoughts, and the freshness they gain because said by him. The truth is, we mix their greatness with all they say and give it our best attention. Johannes Faber sic cogitavit would be no enticing preface to a book, but an accredited name gives credit like the signature to a note of hand. It is the advantage of fame that it is always privileged to take the world by the button, and a thing is weightier for Shakespeare's uttering it by the whole amount of his personality.

It is singular how impatient men are with overpraise of others, how patient with overpraise of themselves; and yet the one does them no injury while the other may be their ruin.



People are apt to confound mere alertness of mind with attention. The one is but the flying abroad of all the faculties to the open doors and windows at every passing rumor; the other is the concentration of every one of them in a single focus, as in the alchemist over his alembic at the moment of expected projection. Attention is the stuff that memory is made of, and memory is accumulated genius.

Do not look for the Millennium as imminent. One generation is apt to get all the wear it can out of the cast clothes of the last, and is always sure to use up every paling of the old fence that will hold a nail in building the new.

You suspect a kind of vanity in my genealogical enthusiasm. Perhaps you are right; but it is a universal foible. Where it does not show itself in a personal and private way, it becomes public and gregarious. We flatter ourselves in the Pilgrim Fathers, and the Virginian offshoot of a transported convict swells with the fancy of a cavalier ancestry. Pride of birth, I have noticed, takes two forms. One complacently traces himself up to a coronet; another, defiantly, to a lapstone. The sentiment is precisely the same in both cases, only that one is the positive and the other the negative pole of it.

Seeing a goat the other day kneeling in order to graze with less trouble, it seemed to me a type of the common notion of prayer. Most people are ready enough to go down on their knees for material blessings, but how few for those spiritual gifts which alone are an answer to our orisons, if we but knew it!

Some people, nowadays, seem to have hit upon a new moralization of the moth and the candle. They would look up the light of Truth, lest poor Psyche should put it out in her effort to draw nigh to it.

No. X

MR. HOSEA BIGLOW TO THE  
EDITOR OF THE ATLANTIC  
MONTHLY

DEAR SIR, — Your letter come to han'

Requestin' me to please be funny;

But I ain't made upon a plan

Thet knows wut's comin', gall or honey:

Ther' 's times the world doos look so queer,

Odd fancies come afore I call 'em;

An' then agin, for half a year,  
No preacher 'thout a call 's more solemn.

You 're 'n want o' sunthin' light an' cute,  
Rattlin' an' shrewd an' kin' o' jingle-  
ish,

An' wish, pervidin' it 'ould suit,

I 'd take an' citify my English.

I *ken* write long-tailed, ef I please, —

But when I 'm jokin', no, I thankee;

Then, 'fore I know it, my idees

Run helter-skelter into Yankee.

Sence I begun to scribble rhyme,

I tell ye wut, I hain't ben foolin';

The parson's books, life, death, an' time

Hev took some trouble with my school-  
in';

Nor th' airth don't git put out with me,

Thet love her 'z though she wuz a wo-  
man;

Why, th' ain't a bird upon the tree

But half forgives my bein' human.

An' yit I love th' unhighschool'd way

Ol' farmers hed when I wuz younger;

Their talk wuz meatier, an' 'ould stay,

While book-froth seems to whet your  
hunger;

For puttin' in a downright lick

'twixt Humbug's eyes, ther' 's few can  
metch it,

An' then it helves my thoughts ez slick

Ez stret-grained hickory doos a hetchet.

But when I can't, I can't, thet 's all,

For Natur' won't put up with gullin';

Idees you hev to shove an' haul

Like a druv pig ain't wuth a mullein:

Live thoughts ain't sent for; thru all  
rifts

O' sense they pour an' resh ye onwards,

Like rivers when south-lyin' drifts

Feel thet th' old airth 's a-wheelin' sun-  
wards.

Time wuz, the rhymes come crowdin' thick

Ez office-seekers arter' lection,

An' into ary place 'ould stick

Without no bother nor objection;

But sence the war my thoughts hang back

Ez though I wanted to enlist 'em,

An' subs'tutes, — *they* don't never lack,

But then they 'll slope afore you 've  
mist 'em.

Nothin' don't seem like wut it wuz;

I can't see wut there is to hender,  
An' yit my brains jes' go buzz, buzz,

Like bumblebees agin a winder;  
'fore these times come, in all airth's row,  
Ther' wuz one quiet place, my head in,  
Where I could hide an' think, — but now  
It's all one teeter, hopin', dreadin'.

Where 's Peace? I start, some clear-  
blown night,

When gaunt stone walls grow numb an'  
number,  
An', creakin' 'cross the snow-crus' white,  
Walk the col' starlight into summer;  
Up grows the moon, an' swell by swell  
Thru the pale pasturs silvers dimmer  
Than the last smile thet strives to tell  
O' love gone heavenward in its shim-  
mer.

I hev been gladder o' sech things  
Than cocks o' spring or bees o' clover,  
They filled my heart with livin' springs,  
But now they seem to freeze 'em over;  
Sights innercent ez babes on knee,  
Peaceful ez eyes o' pastur'd cattle,  
Jes' coz they be so, seem to me  
To rile me more with thoughts o' bat-  
tle.

Indoors an' out by spells I try;  
Ma'am Natur' keeps her spin-wheel  
goin',

But leaves my natur' stiff and dry  
Ez fiel's o' clover arter mowin';  
An' her jes' keepin' on the same,  
Calmer 'n a clock, an' never carin',  
An' findin' nary thing to blame,  
Is wus than ef she took to swearin'.

Snow-flakes come whisperin' on the pane  
The charm makes blazin' logs so pleas-  
ant,

But I can't hark to wut they 're say'n',  
With Grant or Sherman ollers present;  
The chimbleys shudder in the gale,  
Thet lulls, then suddin takes to flap-  
pin'

Like a shot hawk, but all 's ez stale  
To me ez so much sperit-rappin'.

Under the yaller-pines I house,  
When sunshine makes 'em all sweet-  
scented,

An' hear among their furry boughs  
The baskin' west-wind purr contented,  
While 'way o'erhead, ez sweet an' low  
Ez distant bells thet ring for meetin',  
The wedged wil' geese their bugles blow,  
Further an' further South retreatin'.

Or up the slippery knob I strain  
An' see a hundred hills like islan's  
Lift their blue woods in broken chain  
Out o' the sea o' snowy silence;  
The farm-smokes, sweetes' sight on airth,  
Slow thru the winter air a-shrinkin'  
Seem kin' o' sad, an' roun' the hearth  
Of empty places set me thinkin'.

Beaver roars hoarse with meltin' snows,  
An' rattles di'mon's from his granite;  
Time wuz, he snatched away my prose,  
An' into psalms or satires ran it;  
But he, nor all the rest thet once  
Started my blood to country-dances,  
Can't set me goin' more 'n a dunce  
Thet hain't no use for dreams an'  
fancies.

Rat-tat-tat-tattle thru the street  
I hear the drummers makin' riot,  
An' I set thinkin' o' the feet  
Thet follered once an' now are quiet, —  
White feet ez snowdrops innercent,  
Thet never knowed the paths o' Satan,  
Whose comin' step ther' 's ears thet won't,  
No, not lifelong, leave off awaitin'.

Why, hain't I held 'em on my knee?  
Did n't I love to see 'em growin',  
Three likely lads ez wal could be,  
Hahnsome an' brave an' not tu knowin'?  
I set an' look into the blaze  
Whose natur', jes' like theirn, keeps  
climbin',  
Ez long 'z it lives, in shinin' ways,  
An' half despise myself for rhymin'.

Wut 's words to them whose faith an'  
truth

On War's red techstone rang true metal,  
Who ventered life an' love an' youth  
For the gret prize o' death in battle?  
To him who, deadly hurt, agen  
Flashed on afore the charge's thunder,  
Tippin' with fire the bolt of men  
Thet rived the Rebel line asunder?

'Tain't right to hev the young go fust,  
 All throbbin' full o' gifts an' graces,  
 Leavin' life's paupers dry ez dust  
 To try an' make b'lieve fill their places:  
 Nothin' but tells us wut we miss,  
 Ther' 's gaps our lives can't never fay in,  
 An' *thet* world seems so fur from this  
 Lef' for us loafers to grow gray in !

My eyes cloud up for rain; my mouth  
 Will take to twitchin' roun' the corners;  
 I pity mothers, tu, down South,  
 For all they sot among the scornors:  
 I 'd sooner take my chance to stan'  
 At Jedgment where your meanest slave  
 is,  
 Than at God's bar hol' up a han'  
 Ez drippin' red ez yourn, Jeff Davis !

Come, Peace ! not like a mourner bowed  
 For honor lost an' dear ones wasted,  
 But proud, to meet a people proud,  
 With eyes thet tell o' triumph tasted !  
 Come, with han' grippin' on the hilt,  
 An' step thet proves ye Victory's daugh-  
 ter !  
 Longin' for you, our sperits wilt  
 Like shipwrecked men's on raf's for  
 water.

Come, while our country feels the lift  
 Of a gret instinct shoutin' " Forwards ! "  
 An' knows thet freedom ain't a gift  
 Thet tarries long in han's o' cowards !  
 Come, sech ez mothers prayed for, when  
 They kissed their cross with lips thet  
 quivered,  
 An' bring fair wages for brave men,  
 A nation saved, a race delivered !

## NO. XI

MR. HOSEA BIGLOW'S SPEECH  
IN MARCH MEETING

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ATLANTIC  
MONTHLY

JAALAM, April 5, 1866.

MY DEAR SIR, —

(an' noticin' by your kiver thet you 're  
 some dearer than wut you wuz, I enclose  
 the deffrence) I dunno ez I know jest how  
 to interdooce this las' perduction of my

mews, ez Parson Willber allus called 'em,  
 which is goin' to *be* the last an' *stay* the last  
 onless sunthin' pertikler sh'd interfear  
 which I don't expee' ner I wun't yield tu  
 ef it wuz ez pressin' ez a deppity Shiriff.  
 Sence Mr. Wilbur's disease I hev n't hed  
 no one thet could dror out my talons. He  
 ust to kind o' wine me up an' set the  
 penderlum agoin' an' then somehow I  
 seemed to go on tick as it wear tell I run  
 down, but the noo minister ain't of the  
 same brewin' nor I can't seem to git ahold  
 of no kine of huming nater in him but sort  
 of slide rite off as you du on the eedge of a  
 mow. Minnysteeril natur is wal enough  
 an' a site better 'n most other kines I know  
 on, but the other sort sech as Welbor hed  
 wuz of the Lord's makin' an' naterally more  
 wonderfle an' sweet tastin' leastways to  
 me so fur as heerd from. He used to in-  
 terdooce 'em smooth ez ile athout sayin'  
 nothin' in pertiekler an' I misdoubt he  
 did n't set so much by the sec'nd Ceres as  
 wut he done by the Fust, fact, he let on  
 onet thet his mine misgive him of a sort of  
 fallin' off in spots. He wuz as outspoken  
 as a norwester *he* wuz, but I tole him I  
 hoped the fall wuz from so high up thet a  
 feller could ketch a good many times fust  
 afore comin' bunt onto the ground as I see  
 Jethro C. Swett from the meetin' house  
 steeple up to th' old perrish, an' took up  
 for dead but he's alive now an' spry as wut  
 you be. Turnin' of it over I relected  
 how they ust to put wut they called Argy-  
 muncce onto the frunts of poyms, like  
 poorches afore housen whare you could rest  
 ye a spell whilst you wuz concludin'  
 whether you 'd go in or nut espeshully ware  
 tha wuz darters, though I most allus found  
 it the best plen to go in fust an' think after-  
 wards an' the gals likes it best tu. I dno  
 as speechis ever hez any argimunts to 'em,  
 I never see none thet hed an' I guess they  
 never du but tha most allus be a B'ginnin'  
 to everythin' athout it is Eternity so I 'll  
 begin rite away an' anybody may put it  
 afore any of his speeches ef it soots an'  
 welcome. I don't claim no paytent.

## THE ARGYMUNT

Interdueshin, w'ich may be skipt. Be-  
 gins by talkin' about himself: thet 's jest  
 natur an' most gin'ally allus pleasin', I

b'leeve I've notist, to one of the cumpany, an' thet's more than wut you can say of most speshes of talkin'. Nex' comes the gittin' the goodwill of the orjunce by lettin' 'em gether from wut you kind of ex'dentally let drop thet they air about East, A one, an' no mistaik, skare 'em up an' take 'em as they rise. Spring interdooced with a fiew approput flours. Speach finally begins fith nobuddy need n't feel obologated to read as I never read 'em an' never shell this one ag'in. Subjick staited; expanded; delayed; extended. Pump lively. Subjick staited ag'in so's to avide all mistaiks. Ginnle remarks; continooed; kerried on; pushed furdur; kind o' gin out. Subjick restaited; dielooted; stirred up permiscoous. Pump ag'in. Gits back to where he sot out. Can't seem to stay thair. Ketches into Mr. Seaward's hair. Breaks loose ag'in an' staitis his subjick; stretches it; turns it; folds it; onfolds it; folds it ag'in so's 't no one can't find it. Argoos with an imedjinary bean thet ain't aloud to say nothin' in repleye. Gives him a real good dressin' an' is settysfide he's rite. Gits into Johnson's hair. No use tryin' to git into his head. Gives it up. Hez to stait his subjick ag'in; doos it back'ards, sideways, eendways, criss-cross, bevellin', noways. Gits finally red on it. Concloods. Concloods more. Reads some xtrax. Sees his subjick a-nosin' round arter him ag'in. Tries to avide it. Wun't du. Misstates it. Can't conjectur' no other plawsable way of staytin' on it. Tries pump. No fx. Finely concloods to conclood. Yeels the flore.

You kin spall an' punctooate thet as you please. I allus do, it kind of puts a noo soot of close onto a word, thisere funattiek spellin' doos an' takes 'em out of the prisens dress they wair in the Dixonary. Ef I squeeze the cents out of 'em it's the main thing, an' wut they wuz made for; wut's left's jest pummis.

Mistur Wilbur sez he to me onct, sez he, "Hosee," sez he, "in litterytoor the only good thing is Natur. It's amazin' hard to come at," sez he, "but onct git it an' you've got everythin'. Wut's the sweetest small on airth?" sez he. "Noomone hay," sez I, pooty break, for he wuz allus hankerin' round in hayin'. "Nawthin' of the kine," sez he. "My leetle Hully's

breath," sez I ag'in. "You're a good lad," sez he, his eyes sort of ripplin' like, for he lost a babe onct nigh about her age, — "you're a good lad; but 'tain't thet nuther," sez he. "Ef you want to know," sez he, "open your winder of a mornin' et ary season, and you'll larn thet the best of perfooms is jest fresh air, *fresh air*," sez he, emphysizin', "athout no mixtur. Thet's wut I call natur in writin', and it bathes my lungs and washes 'em sweet whenever I git a whiff on 't," sez he. I offen think o' thet when I set down to write, but the winders air so ept to git stuck, an' breakin' a pane costs sunthin'.

Yourn for the last time,

Nut to be continooed,

HOSEA BIGLOW.

I DON'T much s'pose, hows'ever I should plen it,

I could git boosted into th' House or Sen-nit, —

Nut while the twolegged gab-machine's so plenty,

'nablin' one man to du the talk o' twenty; I'm one o' them thet finds it ruther hard To mannyfactur' wisdom by the yard, An' maysure off, accordin' to demand, The piece-goods el'kence that I keep on hand,

The same ole pattern runnin' thru an' thru,

An' nothin' but the customer thet's new.

I sometimes think, the furdur on I go, Thet it gits harder to feel sure I know, An' when I've settled my idees, I find 't warn't I sheered most in makin' up my mind;

't wuz this an' thet an' t' other thing thet done it,

Sunthin' in th' air, I could n' seek nor shun it.

Mos' folks go off so quick now in discus-sion,

All th' ole flint-locks seems altered to per-cussion,

Whilst I in agin' sometimes git a hint, Thet I'm percussion changin' back to flint; Wal, ef it's so, I ain't agoin' to werrit, For th' ole Queen's-arm hez this pertickler merit, —

It gives the mind a hahnsome wedth o' margin

To kin' o make its will afore dischargin' :



I can't make out but jest one ginnle  
rule,—

No man need go an' *make* himself a fool,  
Nor judgment ain't like mutton, thet can't  
bear

Cookin' tu long, nor be took up tu rare.

Ez I wuz say'n, I hain't no chance to  
speak

So's 't all the country dreads me onct a  
week,

But I've consid'ble o' thet sort o' head  
Thet sets to home an' thinks wut *might* be  
said,

The sense thet grows an' werrits under-  
neath,

Comin' belated like your wisdom-teeth,  
An' git so el'kent, sometimes, to my gardin  
Thet I don' vally public life a fardin'.

Our Parson Wilbur (blessin's on his head !)  
'mongst other stories of ole times he hed,  
Talked of a feller thet rehearsed his  
spreads

Beforehan' to his rows o' kebbige-heads,  
(Ef't warn't Demossenes, I guess 't wuz  
Sisro.)

Appealin' fust to thet an' then to this  
row,

Accordin' ez he thought thet his ideas  
Their diff'runt ev'riges o' brains 'ould  
please ;

"An'," sez the Parson, "to hit right, you  
must

Git used to maysurin' your hearers fust ;  
For, take my word for 't, when all's come  
an' past,

The kebbige-heads 'll cair the day et last ;  
Th' ain't ben a meetin' sence the worl'  
begun

But they made (raw or biled ones) ten to  
one."

I've allus foun' 'em, I allow, sence then

About ez good for talkin' tu ez men ;

They 'll take edvice, like other folks, to  
keep,

(To use it 'ould be holdin' on 't tu cheap,)  
They listen wal, don' kick up when you  
scold 'em,

An' ef they've tongues, hev sense enough  
to hold 'em ;

Though th' ain't no denger we shall lose  
the breed,

I gin'ly keep a score or so for seed,

An' when my sappiness gits spry in spring,

So's 't my tongue itches to run on full  
swing,

I fin' 'em ready-planted in March-meetin',  
Warm ez a lyceum-audience in their  
greetin',

An' pleased to hear my spoutin' frum the  
fence,—

Comin', ez 't doos, entirely free 'f expense.  
This year I made the follerin' observations  
Extrump'ry, like most other tri'ls o' pa-  
tience,

An', no reporters bein' sent express  
To work their abstrac's up into a mess

Ez like th' orid'g'nal ez a woodcut pictur'  
Thet chokes the life out like a boy-constrictor,

I've writ 'em out, an' so avide all jeal'sies  
'twixt nonsense o' my own an' some one's  
else's.

(N. B. Reporters gin'ly git a hint

To make dull orjunces seem 'live in print,  
An', ez I hev t' report myself, I vum,  
I 'll put th' applauses where they'd *ough'*  
to come !)

MY FELLER KEBBIGE-HEADS, who look so  
green,

I vow to gracious thet ef I could dreem  
The world of all its hearers but jest you,  
't would leave 'bout all tha' is wuth talkin'  
to,

An' you, my ven'able ol' frien's, thet show  
Upon your crowns a sprinklin' o' March  
snow,

Ez ef mild Time had christened every sense  
For wisdom's church o' second innocence,  
Nut Age's winter, no, no sech a thing,  
But jest a kin' o' slippin'-back o' spring,—

[Sev'ril noses blowed.]

We've gathered here, ez ushle, to decide  
Which is the Lord's an' which is Satan's  
side,

Coz all the good or evil thet can heppen  
Is 'long o' which on 'em you choose for  
Cappen.

[Cries o' "Thet's so."]

Aprul's come back ; the swellin' buds of  
oak

Dim the fur hillsides with a purplish  
smoke ;

The brooks are loose an', singing to be seen,  
(Like gals,) make all the hollers soft an'  
green ;

The birds are here, for all the season's late;

They take the sun's height an' don't never wait;

Soon 'z he officially declares it's spring  
Their light hearts lift 'em on a north'ard wing,

An' th' ain't an acre, fur ez you can hear,  
Can't by the music tell the time o' year;  
But thet white dove Carliny scared away,  
Five year ago, jes' sech an April day;  
Peace, that we hoped 'ould come an' build last year

An' coo by every housedoor, is n't here, —  
No, nor wun't never be, for all our jaw,  
Till we 're ez brave in pol'tics ez in war!  
O Lord, ef folks wuz made so's 't they could see

The begnet-pint there is to an idee!

[Sensation.]

Ten times the danger in 'em th' is in steel;  
They run your soul thru an' you never feel,  
But crawl about an' seem to think you're livin',

Poor shells o' men, nut wuth the Lord's forgivin',

Tell you come bunt ag'in a real live feet,  
An' go to pieces when you 'd ough' to ect!  
Thet kin' o' begnet's wut we 're crossin' now,

An' no man, fit to nevvigate a scow,  
'ould stan' expectin' help from Kingdom Come,

While t' other side druv their cold iron home.

My frien's, you never gethered from my mouth,

No, nut one word ag'in the South ez South,  
Nor th' ain't a livin' man, white, brown, nor black,

Gladder'n wut I should be to take 'em back;

But all I ask of Uncle Sam is fust  
To write up on his door, "No goods on trust";

[Cries o' "Thet 's the ticket!"]

Give us cash down in ekle laws for all,  
An' they 'll be snug inside afore nex' fall.  
Give wut they ask, an' we shell hev Jama-ker,

Wuth minus some consid'able an acre;  
Give wut they need, an' we shell git 'fore long

A nation all one piece, rich, peacefle, strong;

Make 'em Amerikin, an' they 'll begin  
To love their country ez they loved their sin;

Let 'em stay Southun, an' you 've kep' a sore

Ready to fester ez it done afore.

No mortle man can boast of perfie' vision,  
But the one moleblin' thing is Indecision,  
An' th' ain't no futur' for the man nor state  
Thet out of j-u-s-t can't spell great.

Some folks 'ould call thet reddikle; do you?

'T was commonsense afore the war wuz thru;

Thet loaded all our guns an' made 'em speak

So's 't Europe hearded 'em clearn acrost the creek;

"They 're drivin' o' their spiles down now," sez she,

"To the hard grennit o' God's fust idee;  
Ef they reach thet, Democ'cy need n't fear  
The tallest airthquakes we can git up here."

Some call 't insultin' to ask *ary* pledge,  
An' say 't will only set their teeth on edge,  
But folks you 've jest licked, fur 'z I ever see,

Are 'bout ez mad 'z they wal know how to be;  
It's better than the Rebs themselves expected

'fore they see Uncle Sam wilt down hen-pected;

Be kind 'z you please, but fustly make things fast,

For plain Truth's all the kindness thet 'll last;

Ef treason is a crime, ez *some* folks say,  
How could we punish it in a milder way

Than sayin' to 'em, "Brethren, lookee here,  
We 'll jes' divide things with ye, sheer an' sheer,

An' sence both come o' pooty strong-backed daddies,

You take the Darkies, ez we 've took the Paddies;

Ign'ant an' poor we took 'em by the hand,  
An' they 're the bones an' sinners o' the land."

I ain't o' them thet fancy there's a loss on  
Every inves'tment thet don't start from Bos'on;

But I know this: our money's safest trusted  
In sunthin', come wut will, thet *can't* be busted,

An' thet 's the old Amerikin idee,

To make a man a Man an' let him be.

[Gret applause.]

Ez for their l'yalty, don't take a goad to 't,  
But I do' want to block their only road  
to 't

By lettin' 'em believe that they can git  
Mor 'n wut they lost, out of our little wit:  
I tell ye wut, I 'm 'fraid we 'll drif' to lee-  
ward

'thout we can put more stiffenin' into  
Seward;

He seems to think Columby 'd better ect  
Like a scared widder with a boy stiff-  
necked

Thet stomps an' swears he wun't come in  
to supper;

She mus' set up for him, ez weak ez  
Tupper,

Keepin' the Constitootion on to warm,  
Tell he 'll ecept her 'pologies in form:  
The neighbors tell her he 's a cross-grained  
cuss

Thet needs a hidin' 'fore he comes to wus;  
"No," sez Ma Seward, "he 's ez good 'z  
the best,

All he wants now is sugar-plums an' rest;"  
"He sarsed my Pa," sez one; "He stoned  
my son,"

Another edds. "Oh wal, 't wus jes' his  
fun."

"He tried to shoot our Uncle Samwell  
dead."

"'T wuz only tryin' a noo gun he hed."

"Wal, all we ask 's to hev it understood  
You'll take his gun away from him for  
good;

We don't, wal, nut exac'ly, like his play,  
Seein' he allus kin' o' shoots our way.

You kill your fatted calves to no good  
eend,

'thout his fust sayin', 'Mother, I hev  
sinned!'"

[“Amen!” frum Deac'n Greenleaf.]

The Pres'dunt *he* thinks thet the slickest  
plan

'ould be t' allow thet he 's our on'y man,  
An' thet we fit thru all thet drefle war

Jes' for his private glory an' eclor;

"Nobody ain't a Union man," sez he,

"'thout he agrees, thru thick an' thin, with  
me;

Warn't Andrew Jackson's 'nitals jes' like  
mine?

An' ain't thet sunthin like a right divine

To cut up ez kentenkerous ez I please,  
An' treat your Congress like a nest o'  
fleas?"

Wal, I expec' the People would n' care, if  
The question now wuz techin' bank or  
tariff,

But I conclude they've 'bout made up  
their min'

This ain't the fittest time to go it blin',  
Nor these ain't metters thet with pol'tics  
swings,

But goes 'way down amongst the roots o'  
things;

Coz Sumner talked o' whitewashin' one  
day

They wun't let four years' war be throwed  
away.

"Let the South hev her rights?" They  
say, "Thet's you!

But nut greb hold of other folks's tu."

Who owns this country, is it they or Andy?  
Leastways it ough' to be the People *and*  
he;

Let him be senior pardner, ef he 's so,  
But let them kin' o' smuggle in ez Co;

[Laughter.]

Did he diskiver it? Consid'ble numbers  
Think thet the job wuz taken by Columbus.

Did he set tu an' make it wut it is?

Ef so, I guess the One-Man-power *hez* riz.  
Did he put thru the rebbles, clear the  
docket,

An' pay th' expenses out of his own pocket?  
Ef thet 's the case, then everythin' I exes

Is t'hev him come an' pay my ennooal  
texes. [Profoun' sensation.]

Was 't he thet shou'dered all them million  
guns?

Did he lose all the fathers, brothers, sons?  
Is this ere pop'lar gov'ment thet we run

A kin' o' sulky, made to kerry one?

An' is the country goin' to knuckle down  
To hev Smith sort their letters 'stid o'  
Brown?

Who wuz the 'Nited States 'fore Richmon'  
fell?

Wuz the South needfle their full name to  
spell?

An' can't we spell it in thet short-han' way  
Till th' underpinnin' 's settled so 's to  
stay?

Who cares for the Resolves of '61,

Thet tried to coax an airthquake with a  
bun?

Hez act'ly nothin' taken place sence then

To larn folks they must hendle feets like men ?

Ain't *this* the true p'int ? Did the Rebs accep' 'em ?

Ef nut, whose fault is 't thet we hev n't kep' 'em ?

War n't there *two* sides ? an' don't it stend to reason

Thet this week's 'Nited States ain't las' week's treason ?

When all these sums is done, with nothin' missed,

An' nut afore, this school 'll be dismissed.

I knowed ez wal ez though I 'd seen 't with eyes

Thet when the war wuz over copper 'd rise,

An' thet we 'd hev a rile-up in our kettle 't would need Leviathan's whole skin to settle:

I thought 't would take about a generation 'fore we could wal begin to be a nation, But I allow I never did imegine 't would be our Pres'dunt thet 'ould drive a wedge in

To keep the split from closin' ef it could, An' healin' over with new wholesome wood; For th' ain't no chance o' healin' while they think

Thet law an' gov'ment 's only printer's ink; I mus' confess I thank him for discoverin' The curus way in which the States are sov- ereign;

They ain't nut *quite* enough so to rebel, But, when they fin' it 's costly to raise h —,

[A groan from Deac'n G.]

Why, then, for jes' the same superl'tive reason,

They're 'most too much so to be tetched for treason;

They *can't* go out, but ef they somehow *du*, Their sovereignty don't nowadays go out tu; The State goes out, the sovereignty don't stir,

But stays to keep the door ajar for her. He thinks secession never took 'em out, An' mebbly he 's correc', but I misdoubt; Ef they war'n't out, then why, 'n the name o' sin,

Make all this row 'bout lettin' of 'em in ? In law, p'raps nut; but there 's a diffur- ence, ruther,

Betwixt your mother-'n-law an' real mother,

[Derisive cheers.]

An' I, for one, shall wish they 'd all ben *som'eres*,

Long 'z U. S. Texes are sech reg'lar comers. But, O my patience ! must we wriggle back

Into th' ole crooked, pettyfoggin' track, When our artil'ry-wheels a road hev cut Stret to our purpose ef we keep the rut ? War 's jes' dead waste excep' to wipe the slate

Clean for the cyph'rin' of some nobler fate. [Applause.]

Ez for dependin' on their oaths an' thet, 't wun't bind 'em mor 'n the ribbin roun' my het:

I heared a fable once from Othniel Starns, That pints it slick ez weathercocks do barns:

Onct on a time the wolves hed certing rights

Inside the fold ; they used to sleep there nights,

An', bein' cousins o' the dogs, they took Their turns et watchin', reg'lar ez a book; But somehow, when the dogs hed gut asleep,

Their love o' mutton beat their love o' sheep,

Till gradilly the shepherds come to see Things war'n't agoin' ez they 'd ough' to be; So they sent off a deacon to remonstrate Along 'th the wolves an' urge 'em to go on straight;

They did n' seem to set much by the dea- con,

Nor preachin' did n' cow 'em, nut to speak on;

Fin'ly they swore thet they 'd go out an' stay,

An' hev their fill o' mutton every day; Then dogs an' shepherds, after much hard dammin',

[Groan from Deac'n G.]

Turned tu an' give 'em a tormented lam- min'.

An' sez, "Ye sha'n't go out, the murrain rot ye,

To keep us wastin' half our time to watch ye !"

But then the question come, How live to- gether

'thout losin' sleep, nor nary yew nor wether ?

Now there wuz some dogs (noways with their keep)



Thet sheered their cousins' tastes an'  
sheered the sheep;

They sez, "Be gin'rous, let 'em swear right  
in,

An', ef they backslide, let 'em swear ag'in;  
Jes' let 'em put on sheep-skins whilst  
they 're swearin' ;

To ask for more 'ould be beyond all bear-  
in'."

"Be gin'rous for yourselves, where *you* 're  
to pay,

Thet 's the best prectice," sez a shepherd  
gray;

"Ez for their oaths they wun't be wuth a  
button,

Long 'z you don't cure 'em o' their taste  
for mutton;

Th' ain't but one solid way, howe'er you  
puzzle:

Tell they 're convarted, let 'em wear a  
muzzle." [Cries of "Bully for you!"]

I 've noticed thet each half-baked scheme's  
abetters

Are in the hebbit o' producin' letters  
Writ by all sorts o' never-heard-on fel-  
lers,

'bout ez oridge'nal ez the wind in bellers;  
I 've noticed, tu, it 's the quack med'cine  
gits

(An' needs) the grettest heaps o' stiffykits;  
[Two pothekeries goes out.]

Now, sence I lef' off creepin' on all fours,  
I hain't ast no man to endorse my course;  
It 's full ez cheap to be your own endorser,  
An' ef I 've made a cup, I 'll fin' the  
saucer;

But I've some letters here from t' other side,  
An' them 's the sort thet helps me to decide;  
Tell me for wut the copper-comp'nies  
hanker,

An' I 'll tell you jest where it 's safe to  
anchor. [Faint hiss.]

Fus'ly the Hon'ble B. O. Sawin writes  
Thet for a spell he could n't sleep o'  
nights,

Puzzlin' which side wuz preudentest to pin  
to,

Which wuz th' ole homestead, which the  
temp'ry leanto;

Et fust he jedged 't would right-side-up  
his pan

To come out ez a 'ridge'nal Union man,  
"But now," he sez, "I ain't nut quite so  
fresh;

The winnin' horse is goin' to be Secesh;  
You might, las' spring, hev eas'ly walked  
the course,

'fore we contrived to doctor th' Union  
horse;

Now *we* 're the ones to walk aroun' the  
nex' track:

Jest you take hol' an' read the follerin' ex-  
trac',

Out of a letter I received last week  
From an ole frien' thet never sprung a  
leak,

A Nothun Dem'crat o' th' ole Jarsey blue,  
Born copper-sheathed an' copper-fastened  
tu."

"These four years past it hez ben tough  
To say which side a feller went for;  
Guideposts all gone, roads muddy 'n' rough,  
An' nothin' duin' wut 't wuz meant for;  
Pickets a-firin' left an' right,  
Both sides a lettin' rip et sight, —  
Life warn't wuth hardly payin' rent for.

"Columby gut her back up so,  
It warn't no use a-tryin' to stop her, —  
War's emptin's riled her very dough  
An' made it rise an' act improper;  
'T wuz full ez much ez I could du  
To jes' lay low an' worry thru,  
'Thout hevin' to sell out my copper.

"Afore the war your mod'rit men  
Could set an' sun 'em on the fences,  
Cyph'rin' the chances up, an' then  
Jump off which way bes' paid expenses;  
Sence, 't wuz so resky ary way,  
I did n't hardly darst to say  
I 'greed with Paley's Evidences.

[Groan from Deac'n G.]

"Ask Mac ef tryin' to set the fence  
Warn't like bein' rid upon a rail on 't,  
Headin' your party with a sense  
O' bein' tipjint in the tail on 't,  
An' tryin' to think thet, on the whole,  
You kin' o' quasi own your soul  
When Belmont 's gut a bill o' sale on 't?

[Three cheers for Grant and Sherman.]

"Come peace, I sposed thet folks 'ould  
like

Their pol'tics done ag'in by proxy  
Give their noo loves the bag an' strike  
A fresh trade with their reg'lar doxy;

But the drag 's broke, now slavery 's gone,  
An' there 's gret resk they 'll blunder on,  
Ef they ain't stopped, to real Democ'y.

"We 've gut an awful row to hoe  
In this 'ere job o' reconstructin';  
Folks dunno skurce which way to go,  
Where th' ain't some boghole to be ducked  
in;

But one thing 's clear; there *is* a crack,  
Ef we pry hard, 'twixt white an' black,  
Where the ole makebate can be tucked in.

"No white man sets in airth's broad aisle  
Thet I ain't willin' t' own ez brother,  
An' ef he 's heppened to strike ile,  
I dunno, fin'ly, but I 'd ruther;  
An' Paddies, long 'z they vote all right,  
Though they ain't jest a nat'ral white,  
I hold one on 'em good 'z another.

[Applause.]

"Wut *is* there lef' I 'd like to know,  
Ef 't ain't the defference o' color,  
To keep up self-respec' an' show  
The human natur' of a fullah?  
Wut good in bein' white, onless  
It's fixed by law, nut lef' to guess,  
We 're a heap smarter an' they duller?

"Ef we're to hev our ekle rights,  
't wun't du to 'low no competition;  
Th' ole debt doo us for bein' whites  
Ain't safe onless we stop th' emission  
O' these noo notes, whose specie base  
Is human natur', 'thout no trace  
O' shape, nor color, nor condition.

[Continood applause.]

"So fur I 'd writ an' could n' jedge  
Aboard wut boat I 'd best take pessige,  
My brains all mincemeat, 'thout no edge  
Upon 'em more than tu a sessige,  
But now it seems ez though I see  
Sunthin' resemblin' an idee,  
Sence Johnson's speech an' veto message.

"I like the speech best, I confess,  
The logic, preudence, an' good taste on 't,  
An' it's so mad, I ruther guess  
There 's some dependance to be placed on 't;  
[Laughter.]

It's narrer, but 'twixt you an' me,  
Out o' the allies o' J. D.  
A temp'ry party can be based on 't.

"Jes' to hold on till Johnson 's thru  
An' dug his Presidential grave is,  
An' *then!* — who knows but we could  
slew

The country roun' to put in — ?  
Wun't some folks rare up when we pull  
Out o' their eyes our Union wool  
An' larn 'em wut a p'lit'cle shave is !

"Oh, did it seem 'z ef Providence  
*Could* ever send a second Tyler?  
To see the South all back to once,  
Reapin' the spiles o' the Freesiler,  
Is cute ez though an ingineer  
Should claim th' old iron for his sheer  
Coz 't was himself that bust the biler!"

[Gret laughter.]

Thet tells the story ! Thet's wut we shall  
git

By tryin' squirtguns on the burnin' Pit;  
For the day never comes when it 'll du  
To kick off Dooty like a worn-out shoe.  
I seem to hear a whisperin' in the air,  
A sighin' like, of unconsolated despair,  
Thet comes from nowhere an' from every-  
where,  
An' seems to say, "Why died we? warn't  
it, then,

To settle, once for all, thet men wuz men?  
Oh, airth's sweet cup snatched from us  
barely tasted,  
The grave's real chill is feelin' life wuz  
wasted !

Oh, you we lef', long-lingerin' et the door,  
Lovin' you best, coz we loved Her the  
more,

Thet Death, not we, had conquered, we  
should feel

Ef she upon our memory turned her heel,  
An' unregretful throwed us all away  
To flaunt it in a Blind Man's Holiday !"

My frien's, I've talked nigh on to long  
enough.

I hain't no call to bore ye coz ye 're tough;  
My lungs are sound, an' our own vice  
delights

Our ears, but even kebbige-heads hez  
rights.

It 's the las' time thet I shelle'er address ye,  
But you 'll soon fin' some new tormentor:  
bless ye !

[Tumult'ous applause and cries of "Go on!" "Don't  
stop!""]

## UNDER THE WILLOWS AND OTHER POEMS

"THE WILLOWS," as was pointed out in the introductory note to *An Indian-Summer Reverie*, was a clump of trees not far from Elmwood. Lowell took a peculiar pleasure in their gnarled and umbrageous forms, and wrote to Fields while the volume which took its title from the trees was in press: "My heart was almost broken yesterday by seeing nailed to my willow a board with these words on it, 'These trees for sale.' The wretch is going to peddle them for firewood! If I had the money, I would buy the piece of ground they stand on to save them — the dear friends of a lifetime. They would be a loss to the town. But what can one do? They belong to a man who values them by the cord. I wish Fenn had sketched them at least. One of them I hope will stand a few years yet in my poem — but he might just as well have outlasted me and my works, making his own green ode every summer." Not all the trees have been destroyed, for some yet remain, and it is a pleasure to record the refusal of a new comer into the neighborhood to have one destroyed which was inconveniently near the site of the house she was to build. She changed, instead, the site.

The varying minds Lowell was in regarding the title of the volume may be learned from the following letter to C. E. Norton, dated

ELMWOOD, October 7, 1868.

... "The summer is past, the harvest is ended," and I have not yet written to you! Well, I was resolved I would not write till the printers had in their hands all the copy of my new volume of old poems. And that has taken longer than I expected. I have been Marthaized by many small troubles. But last

night I fairly ended my work. . . . I had decided to put the "June Idyl" in the forefront and call it "A June Idyl, and Other Poems." But Fields told me that Whittier's new volume was to be called "A Summer Idyl" — so I was blocked there. Then I took "Appledore," merely because it was a pretty name, though I did not wish to put that in the van. So it was all settled for the second time. Then I was suddenly moved to finish my "Voyage to Vinland," . . . and, as I liked the poem, thought no title so good as "The Voyage to Vinland, and Other Poems." But Fields would not hear of it, and proposed that I should rechristen the Idyl "Elmwood," and name the book after that. But the more I thought of it the less I liked it. It was throwing my sanctuary open and making a show-house of my hermitage. It was indecent. So I fumed and worried. I was *riled*. Then it occurred to me that I had taken the name of "June Idyl" as a *pis-aller*, because in my haste I could think of nothing else. Why not name it over? So I hit upon "Under the Willows," and that it is to be. . . . But it is awfully depressing work. They call back so many moods, and they are so bad. I think, though, there is a suggestion of something good in them at least, and they are not silly. But how much the public will stand! I sometimes wonder they don't drive all us authors into a corner and make a *battue* of the whole concern at once.

In making the collection, the first miscellaneous one since the *Poems* published in 1849, Lowell gathered not only those published meanwhile in magazines and other periodicals, but went back and recovered some earlier verses.

## TO CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

AGRO DOLCE

THE wind is roistering out of doors,  
My windows shake and my chimney roars;  
My Elmwood chimneys seem crooning to me,

As of old, in their moody, minor key,  
And out of the past the hoarse wind blows,  
As I sit in my arm-chair, and toast my toes.

"Ho! ho! nine-and-forty," they seem to sing,

"We saw you a little toddling thing.

We knew you child and youth and man,  
A wonderful fellow to dream and plan,  
With a great thing always to come, — who knows?

Well, well! 't is some comfort to toast one's toes.

"How many times have you sat at gaze  
Till the mouldering fire forgot to blaze,  
Shaping among the whimsical coals  
Fancies and figures and shining goals!  
What matters the ashes that cover those?  
While hickory lasts you can toast your toes.

"O dream-ship-builder! where are they  
all,  
Your grand three-deckers, deep-chested  
and tall,  
That should crush the waves under canvas  
piles,  
And anchor at last by the Fortunate Isles?  
There's gray in your beard, the years turn  
foes,  
While you muse in your arm-chair, and  
toast your toes."

I sit and dream that I hear, as of yore,  
My Elmwood chimneys' deep-throated  
roar;

If much be gone, there is much remains;  
By the embers of loss I count my gains,  
You and yours with the best, till the old  
hope glows  
In the fanciful flame, as I toast my toes.

Instead of a fleet of broad-browed ships,  
To send a child's armada of chips!  
Instead of the great guns, tier on tier,  
A freight of pebbles and grass-blades  
sere!

"Well, maybe more love with the less gift  
goes,"

I growl, as, half moody, I toast my toes.

### UNDER THE WILLOWS

FRANK-HEARTED hostess of the field and  
wood,

Gypsy, whose roof is every spreading tree,  
June is the pearl of our New England  
year.

Still a surprisal, though expected long,  
Her coming startles. Long she lies in  
wait,

Makes many a feint, peeps forth, draws  
coily back,

Then, from some southern ambush in the  
sky,

With one great gush of blossom storms the  
world.

A week ago the sparrow was divine;  
The bluebird, shifting his light load of  
song

From post to post along the cheerless  
fence,

Was as a rhymer ere the poet come;  
But now, oh rapture! sunshine winged and  
voiced,

Pipe blown through by the warm wild  
breath of the West

Shepherding his soft droves of fleecy cloud,  
Gladness of woods, skies, waters, all in  
one,

The bobolink has come, and, like the soul  
Of the sweet season vocal in a bird,  
Gurgles in ecstacy we know not what  
Save *June! Dear June! Now God be  
praised for June.*

May is a pious fraud of the almanac,  
A ghastly parody of real Spring  
Shaped out of snow and breathed with  
eastern wind;

Or if, o'er-confident, she trust the date,  
And, with her handful of anemones,  
Herself as shivery, steal into the sun,  
The season need but turn his hour-glass  
round,

And Winter suddenly, like crazy Lear,  
Reels back, and brings the dead May in  
his arms,

Her budding breasts and wan dislusted  
front

With frosty streaks and drifts of his white  
beard

All overblown. Then, warmly walled with  
books,

While my wood-fire supplies the sun's de-  
fect,

Whispering old forest-sagas in its dreams,  
I take my May down from the happy  
shelf

Where perch the world's rare song-birds in  
a row,

Waiting my choice to open with full breast,  
And beg an alms of springtime, ne'er de-  
nied

Indoors by vernal Chaucer, whose fresh  
woods

Throb thick with merle and mavis all the  
year.

July breathes hot, sallows the crispy fields,  
Curls up the wan leaves of the lilac-hedge,  
And every eve cheats us with show of clouds  
That braise the horizon's western rim, or  
hang

Motionless, with heaped canvas drooping  
idly,

Like a dim fleet by starving men besieged,  
Conjectured half, and half deseriad afar,  
Helpless of wind, and seeming to slip back  
Adown the smooth curve of the oily sea.



But June is full of invitations sweet,  
Forth from the chimney's yawn and thrice-  
read tomes

To leisurely delights and sauntering  
thoughts

That brook no ceiling narrower than the  
blue.

The cherry, drest for bridal, at my pane  
Brushes, then listens, *Will he come?* The  
bee,

All dusty as a miller, takes his toll  
Of powdery gold, and grumbles. What a  
day

To sun me and do nothing! Nay, I think  
Merely to bask and ripen is sometimes  
The student's wiser business; the brain  
That forages all climes to line its cells,  
Ranging both worlds on lightest wings of  
wish,

Will not distil the juices it has sucked  
To the sweet substance of pellucid thought,  
Except for him who hath the secret learned  
To mix his blood with sunshine, and to  
take

The winds into his pulses. Hush! 't is  
he!

My oriole, my glance of summer fire,  
Is come at last, and, ever on the watch,  
Twitches the packthread I had lightly  
wound

About the bough to help his housekeep-  
ing,—

Twitches and scouts by turns, blessing his  
luck,

Yet fearing me who laid it in his way,  
Nor, more than wiser we in our affairs,  
Divines the providence that hides and helps.  
*Heave, ho!* *Heave, ho!* he whistles as the  
twine

Slackens its hold; *once more, now!* and a  
flash

Lightens across the sunlight to the elm  
Where his mate dangles at her cup of  
felt.

Nor all his booty is the thread; he trails  
My loosened thought with it along the  
air,

And I must follow, would I ever find  
The inward rhyme to all this wealth of  
life.

I care not how men trace their ancestry,  
To ape or Adam: let them please their  
whim;

But I in June am midway to believe

A tree among my far progenitors,  
Such sympathy is mine with all the race,  
Such mutual recognition vaguely sweet  
There is between us. Surely there are  
times

When they consent to own me of their  
kin,

And condescend to me, and call me cousin,  
Murmuring faint lullabies of eldest time,  
Forgotten, and yet dumbly felt with thrills  
Moving the lips, though fruitless of all  
words.

And I have many a lifelong leafy friend,  
Never estranged nor careful of my soul,  
That knows I hate the axe, and welcomes  
me

Within his tent as if I were a bird,  
Or other free companion of the earth,  
Yet undegenerate to the shifts of men.  
Among them one, an ancient willow,  
spreads

Eight balanced limbs, springing at once all  
round

His deep-ridged trunk with upward slant  
diverse,

In outline like enormous beaker, fit  
For hand of Jotun, where mid snow and  
mist

He holds unwieldy revel. This tree, spared,  
I know not by what grace,— for in the  
blood

Of our New World subduers lingers yet  
Hereditary feud with trees, they being  
(They and the red-man most) our fathers'  
foes,—

Is one of six, a willow Pleiades,  
The seventh fallen, that lean along the  
brink

Where the steep upland dips into the marsh,  
Their roots, like molten metal cooled in  
flowing,

Stiffened in coils and runnels down the  
bank.

The friend of all the winds, wide-armed he  
towers

And glints his steely aglets in the sun,  
Or whitens fitfully with sudden bloom  
Of leaves breeze-lifted, much as when a  
shoal

Of devious minnows wheel from where a  
pike

Lurks balanced 'neath the lily-pads, and  
whirl

A rood of silver bellies to the day.  
Alas! no acorn from the British oak

'Neath which slim fairies tripping wrought  
those rings

Of greenest emerald, wherewith fireside life  
Did with the invisible spirit of Nature  
wed,

Was ever planted here! No darnel fancy  
Might choke one useful blade in Puritan  
fields;

With horn and hoof the good old Devil  
came,

The witch's broomstick was not contra-  
band,

But all that superstition had of fair,  
Or piety of native sweet, was doomed.  
And if there be who nurse unholy faiths,  
Fearing their god as if he were a wolf  
That snuffed round every home and was  
not seen,

There should be some to watch and keep  
alive

All beautiful beliefs. And such was that, —  
By solitary shepherd first surmised

Under Thessalian oaks, loved by some maid  
Of royal stirp, that silent came and van-  
ished,

As near her nest the hermit thrush, nor  
dared

Confess a mortal name, — that faith which  
gave

A Hamadryad to each tree; and I  
Will hold it true that in this willow dwells  
The open-handed spirit, frank and blithe,  
Of ancient Hospitality, long since,  
With ceremonious thrift, bowed out of  
doors.

In June 't is good to lie beneath a tree  
While the blithe season comforts every  
sense,

Steeps all the brain in rest, and heals the  
heart,

Brimming it o'er with sweetness unawares,  
Fragrant and silent as that rosy snow  
Wherewith the pitying apple-tree fills up  
And tenderly lines some last-year robin's  
nest.

There muse I of old times, old hopes, old  
friends, —

Old friends! The writing of those words  
has borne

My fancy backward to the gracious past,  
The generous past, when all was possible,  
For all was then untried; the years between  
Have taught some sweet, some bitter lessons,  
none

Wiser than this, — to spend in all things  
else,

But of old friends to be most miserly.  
Each year to ancient friendships adds a  
ring,

As to an oak, and precious more and more,  
Without deservingness or help of others,  
They grow, and, silent, wider spread, each  
year,

Their unbought ring of shelter or of shade.  
Sacred to me the lichens on the bark,  
Which Nature's milliners would scrape  
away;

Most dear and sacred every withered limb!  
'T is good to set them early, for our faith  
Pines as we age, and, after wrinkles come,  
Few plant, but water dead ones with vain  
tears.

This willow is as old to me as life;  
And under it full often have I stretched,  
Feeling the warm earth like a thing alive,  
And gathering virtue in at every pore  
Till it possessed me wholly, and thought  
ceased,

Or was transfused in something to which  
thought

Is coarse and dull of sense. Myself was  
lost,

Gone from me like an ache, and what re-  
mained

Become a part of the universal joy.  
My soul went forth, and, mingling with the  
tree,

Danced in the leaves; or, floating in the  
cloud,

Saw its white double in the stream below;  
Or else, sublimed to purer ecstasy,  
Dilated in the broad blue over all.

I was the wind that dappled the lush  
grass,

The tide that crept with coolness to its  
roots,

The thin-winged swallow skating on the  
air;

The life that gladdened everything was  
mine.

Was I then truly all that I beheld?  
Or is this stream of being but a glass  
Where the mind sees its visionary self,  
As, when the kingfisher flits o'er his bay,  
Across the river's hollow heaven below  
His picture flits, — another, yet the same?  
But suddenly the sound of human voice  
Or footfall, like the drop a chemist pours,

Doth in opacous cloud precipitate  
The consciousness that seemed but now  
dissolved

Into an essence rarer than its own,  
And I am narrowed to myself once more.

For here not long is solitude secure,  
Nor Fantasy left vacant to her spell.  
Here, sometimes, in this paradise of shade,  
Rippled with western winds, the dusty  
Tramp,

Seeing the treeless causey burn beyond,  
Halts to unroll his bundle of strange food  
And munch an unearned meal. I cannot  
help

Liking this creature, lavish Summer's  
bedesman,

Who from the almshouse steals when nights  
grow warm,

Himself his large estate and only charge,  
To be the guest of haystack or of hedge,  
Nobly superior to the household gear  
That forfeits us our privilege of nature.

I bait him with my match-box and my  
pouch,

Nor grudge the uncostly sympathy of  
smoke,

His equal now, divinely unemployed.  
Some smack of Robin Hood is in the man,  
Some secret league with wild wood-wander-  
ing things;

He is our ragged Duke, our barefoot Earl,  
By right of birth exonerate from toil,  
Who levies rent from us his tenants all,  
And serves the state by merely being.  
Here

The Scissors-grinder, pausing, doffs his hat,  
And lets the kind breeze, with its delicate  
fan,

Winnow the heat from out his dank gray  
hair,—

A grimy Ulysses, a much-wandered man,  
Whose feet are known to all the populous  
ways,

And many men and manners he hath seen,  
Not without fruit of solitary thought.

He, as the habit is of lonely men,—  
Unused to try the temper of their mind  
In fence with others,—positive and shy,  
Yet knows to put an edge upon his speech,  
Pithily Saxon in unwilling talk.

Him I entrap with my long-suffering  
knife,

And, while its poor blade hums away in  
sparks,

Sharpen my wit upon his gritty mind,  
In motion set obsequious to his wheel,  
And in its quality not much unlike.

Nor wants my tree more punctual visitors.  
The children, they who are the only rich,  
Creating for the moment, and possessing  
Whate'er they choose to feign,— for still  
with them

Kind Fancy plays the fairy godmother,  
Strewing their lives with cheap material  
For winged horses and Aladdin's lamps,  
Pure elfin-gold, by manhood's touch pro-  
fane

To dead leaves disenchanted,— long ago  
Between the branches of the tree fixed  
seats,

Making an o'eturned box their table. Oft  
The shrilling girls sit here between school  
hours,

And play at *What's my thought like?* while  
the boys,

With whom the age chivalric ever bides,  
Pricked on by knightly spur of female eyes,  
Climb high to swing and shout on perilous  
boughs,

Or, from the willow's armory equipped  
With musket dumb, green banner, edge-  
less sword,

Make good the rampart of their tree-  
redoubt

'Gainst eager British storming from below,  
And keep alive the tale of Bunker's Hill.

Here, too, the men that mend our village  
ways,

Vexing Macadam's ghost with pounded  
slate,

Their nooning take ; much noisy talk they  
spend

On horses and their ills; and, as John Bull  
Tells of Lord This or That, who was his  
friend,

So these make boast of intimacies long  
With famous teams, and add large esti-  
mates,

By competition swelled from mouth to  
mouth,

Of how much they could draw, till one, ill  
pleased

To have his legend overbid, retorts :

"You take and stretch truck-horses in a  
string

From here to Long Wharf end, one thing  
I know,

Not heavy neither, they could never draw, —  
 Ensign's long bow !” Then laughter loud  
 and long.

So they in their leaf-shadowed microcosm  
 Image the larger world; for wheresoe'er  
 Ten men are gathered, the observant eye  
 Will find mankind in little, as the stars  
 Glide up and set, and all the heavens re-  
 volve

In the small welkin of a drop of dew.

I love to enter pleasure by a postern,  
 Not the broad popular gate that gulps the  
 mob;

To find my theatres in roadside nooks,  
 Where men are actors, and suspect it not;  
 Where Nature all unconscious works her  
 will,

And every passion moves with easy gait,  
 Unhindered by the buskin or the train.

Hating the crowd, where we gregarious  
 men

Lead lonely lives, I love society,  
 Nor seldom find the best with simple souls  
 Unswerved by culture from their native  
 bent,

The ground we meet on being primal man  
 And nearer the deep bases of our lives.

But oh, half heavenly, earthly half, my  
 soul,

Canst thou from those late ecstasies de-  
 scend,

Thy lips still wet with the miraculous wine  
 That transubstantiates all thy baser stuff  
 To such divinity that soul and sense,  
 Once more commingled in their source, are  
 lost, —

Canst thou descend to quench a vulgar  
 thirst

With the mere dregs and rinsings of the  
 world ?

Well, if my nature find her pleasure so,  
 I am content, nor need to blush; I take  
 My little gift of being clean from God,  
 Not haggling for a better, holding it  
 Good as was ever any in the world,  
 My days as good and full of miracle.  
 I pluck my nutriment from any bush,  
 Finding out poison as the first men did  
 By tasting and then suffering, if I must.  
 Sometimes my bush burns, and sometimes  
 it is

A leafless wilding shivering by the wall;  
 But I have known when winter barberries

Pricked the effeminate palate with sur-  
 prise  
 Of savor whose mere harshness seemed  
 divine.

Oh, benediction of the higher mood  
 And human-kindness of the lower ! for  
 both

I will be grateful while I live, nor question  
 The wisdom that hath made us what we  
 are,

With such large range as from the ale-  
 house bench

Can reach the stars and be with both at  
 home.

They tell us we have fallen on prosy days,  
 Condemned to glean the leavings of earth's  
 feast

Where gods and heroes took delight of  
 old;

But though our lives, moving in one dull  
 round

Of repetition infinite, become  
 Stale as a newspaper once read, and though  
 History herself, seen in her workshop,  
 seem

To have lost the art that dyed those glori-  
 ous panes,

Rich with memorial shapes of saint and  
 sage,

That pave with splendor the Past's dusky  
 aisles, —

Panels that enchant the light of common day  
 With colors costly as the blood of kings,  
 Till with ideal hues it edge our thought, —  
 Yet while the world is left, while nature  
 lasts,

And man the best of nature, there shall be  
 Somewhere contentment for these human  
 hearts,

Some freshness, some unused material  
 For wonder and for song. I lose myself  
 In other ways where solemn guide-posts  
 say,

*This way to Knowledge, This way to Repose,*  
 But here, here only, I am ne'er betrayed,  
 For every by-path leads me to my love.

God's passionless reformers, influences,  
 That purify and heal and are not seen,  
 Shall man say whence your virtue is, or  
 how

Ye know medicinal the wayside weed ?  
 I know that sunshine, through whatever  
 rift



How shaped it matters not, upon my walls  
Paints discs as perfect - rounded as its  
source,

And, like its antitype, the ray divine,  
However finding entrance, perfect still,  
Repeats the image unimpaired of God.

We, who by shipwreck only find the shores  
Of divine wisdom, can but kneel at first;  
Can but exult to feel beneath our feet,  
That long stretched vainly down the yield-  
ing deeps,

The shock and sustenance of solid earth;  
Inland afar we see what temples gleam  
Through immemorial stems of sacred  
groves,

And we conjecture shining shapes there-  
in ;

Yet for a space we love to wander here  
Among the shells and seaweed of the  
beach.

So mused I once within my willow-tent  
One brave June morning, when the bluff  
northwest,

Thrusting aside a dank and snuffing day  
That made us bitter at our neighbors' sins,  
Brimmed the great cup of heaven with  
sparkling cheer

And roared a lusty stave ; the sliding  
Charles,

Blue toward the west, and bluer and more  
blue,

Living and lustrous as a woman's eyes  
Look once and look no more, with south-  
ward curve

Ran crinkling sunniness, like Helen's hair  
Glimpsed in Elysium, insubstantial gold;  
From blossom-clouded orchards, far away  
The bobolink tinkled; the deep meadows  
flowed

With multitudinous pulse of light and  
shade

Against the bases of the southern hills,  
While here and there a drowsy island rick  
Slept and its shadow slept; the wooden  
bridge

Thundered, and then was silent; on the  
roofs

The sun-warped shingles rippled with the  
heat;

Summer on field and hill, in heart and  
brain,

All life washed clean in this high tide of  
June.

## DARA

WHEN Persia's sceptre trembled in a hand  
Wilted with harem-heats, and all the land  
Was hovered over by those vulture ills  
That snuff decaying empire from afar,  
Then, with a nature balanced as a star,  
Dara arose, a shepherd of the hills.

He who had governed fleecy subjects well  
Made his own village by the selfsame  
spell

Secure and quiet as a guarded fold;  
Then, gathering strength by slow and wise  
degrees

Under his sway, to neighbor villages  
Order returned, and faith and justice old.

Now when it fortune'd that a king more wise  
Endued the realm with brain and hands  
and eyes,

He sought on every side men brave and  
just ;

And having heard our mountain shepherd's  
praise,

How he refilled the mould of elder days,  
To Dara gave a satrapy in trust.

So Dara shepherded a province wide,  
Nor in his viceroy's sceptre took more  
pride

Than in his crook before ; but envy finds  
More food in cities than on mountains  
bare ;

And the frank sun of natures clear and  
rare

Breeds poisonous fogs in low and marshy  
minds.

Soon it was hissed into the royal ear,  
That, though wise Dara's province, year  
by year,

Like a great sponge, sucked wealth and  
plenty up,

Yet, when he squeezed it at the king's be-  
hest,

Some yellow drops, more rich than all the  
rest,

Went to the filling of his private cup.

For proof, they said, that, wheresoe'er he  
went,

A chest, beneath whose weight the camel  
bent,

Went with him ; and no mortal eye had  
seen

What was therein, save only Dara's own ;  
But, when 't was opened, all his tent was  
known

To glow and lighten with heaped jewels'  
sheen.

The King set forth for Dara's province  
straight ;

There, as was fit, outside the city's gate,  
The viceroy met him with a stately train,  
And there, with archers circled, close at  
hand,

A camel with the chest was seen to stand :  
The King's brow reddened, for the guilt  
was plain.

"Open me here," he cried, "this treasure-  
chest!"

'T was done ; and only a worn shepherd's  
vest

Was found therein. Some blushed and  
hung the head ;

Not Dara ; open as the sky's blue roof  
He stood, and "O my lord, behold the  
proof

That I was faithful to my trust," he said.

"To govern men, lo all the spell I had !  
My soul in these rude vestments ever clad  
Still to the unstained past kept true and leal,  
Still on these plains could breathe her  
mountain air,

And fortune's heaviest gifts serenely bear,  
Which bend men from their truth and  
make them reel.

"For ruling wisely I should have small  
skill,

Were I not lord of simple Dara still ;  
That sceptre kept, I could not lose my  
way."

Strange dew in royal eyes grew round and  
bright,

And strained the throbbing lids ; before  
't was night

Two added provinces blest Dara's sway.

### THE FIRST SNOW-FALL

One of the "earlier verses" sent to the *Anti-Slavery Standard*. In a letter to Mr. Gay, dated Elmwood, December 22, 1849, Lowell

wrote: "Print that as if you loved it. Let not a comma be blundered. Especially I fear they will put 'gleaming' for 'gloaming' in the first line unless you look to it. May you never have the key which shall unlock the whole meaning of the poem to you!"

THE snow had begun in the gloaming,  
And busily all the night  
Had been heaping field and highway  
With a silence deep and white.

Every pine and fir and hemlock  
Wore ermine too dear for an earl,  
And the poorest twig on the elm-tree  
Was ridged inch deep with pearl.

From sheds new-roofed with Carrara  
Came Chanticleer's muffled crow,  
The stiff rails softened to swan's-down,  
And still fluttered down the snow.

I stood and watched by the window  
The noiseless work of the sky,  
And the sudden flurries of snow-birds,  
Like brown leaves whirling by.

I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn  
Where a little headstone stood ;  
How the flakes were folding it gently,  
As did robins the babes in the wood.

Up spoke our own little Mabel,  
Saying, "Father, who makes it snow ?"  
And I told of the good All-father  
Who cares for us here below.

Again I looked at the snow-fall,  
And thought of the leaden sky  
That arched o'er our first great sorrow,  
When that mound was heaped so high.

I remembered the gradual patience  
That fell from that cloud like snow,  
Flake by flake, healing and hiding  
The scar that renewed our woe.

And again to the child I whispered,  
"The snow that husheth all,  
Darling, the merciful Father  
Alone can make it fall!"

Then, with eyes that saw not, I kissed her ;  
And she, kissing back, could not know  
That *my* kiss was given to her sister,  
Folded close under deepening snow.

## THE SINGING LEAVES

## A BALLAD

## I

"WHAT fairings will ye that I bring?"  
 Said the King to his daughters three;  
 "For I to Vanity Fair am boun,  
 Now say what shall they be?"

Then up and spake the eldest daughter,  
 That lady tall and grand:  
 "Oh, bring me pearls and diamonds great,  
 And gold rings for my hand."

Thereafter spake the second daughter,  
 That was both white and red:  
 "For me bring silks that will stand alone,  
 And a gold comb for my head."

Then came the turn of the least daughter,  
 That was whiter than thistle-down,  
 And among the gold of her blithesome hair  
 Dim shone the golden crown.

"There came a bird this morning,  
 And sang 'neath my bower eaves,  
 Till I dreamed, as his music made me,  
 'Ask thou for the Singing Leaves.'"

Then the brow of the King swelled crimson  
 With a flush of angry scorn:  
 "Well have ye spoken, my two eldest,  
 And chosen as ye were born;

"But she, like a thing of peasant race,  
 That is happy binding the sheaves;"  
 Then he saw her dead mother in her face,  
 And said, "Thou shalt have thy leaves."

## II

He mounted and rode three days and nights  
 Till he came to Vanity Fair,  
 And 't was easy to buy the gems and the  
 silk,  
 But no Singing Leaves were there.

Then deep in the greenwood rode he,  
 And asked of every tree,  
 "Oh, if you have ever a Singing Leaf,  
 I pray you give it me!"

But the trees all kept their counsel,  
 And never a word said they,

Only there sighed from the pine-tops  
 A music of seas far away.

Only the pattering aspen  
 Made a sound of growing rain,  
 That fell ever faster and faster,  
 Then faltered to silence again.

"Oh, where shall I find a little foot-page  
 That would win both hose and shoon,  
 And will bring to me the Singing Leaves  
 If they grow under the moon?"

Then lightly turned him Walter the page,  
 By the stirrup as he ran:  
 "Now pledge you me the truesome word  
 Of a king and gentleman,

"That you will give me the first, first thing  
 You meet at your castle-gate,  
 And the Princess shall get the Singing  
 Leaves,  
 Or mine be a traitor's fate."

The King's head dropt upon his breast  
 A moment, as it might be;  
 "T will be my dog, he thought, and said,  
 "My faith I plight to thee."

Then Walter took from next his heart  
 A packet small and thin,  
 "Now give you this to the Princess Anne,  
 The Singing Leaves are therein."

## III

As the King rode in at his castle-gate,  
 A maiden to meet him ran,  
 And "Welcome, father!" she laughed and  
 cried  
 Together, the Princess Anne.

"Lo, here the Singing Leaves," quoth he,  
 "And woe, but they cost me dear!"  
 She took the packet, and the smile  
 Deepened down beneath the tear.

It deepened down till it reached her heart,  
 And then gushed up again,  
 And lighted her tears as the sudden sun  
 Transfigures the summer rain.

And the first Leaf, when it was opened,  
 Sang: "I am Walter the page,  
 And the songs I sing 'neath thy window  
 Are my only heritage."

And the second Leaf sang: "But in the land

That is neither on earth nor sea,  
My lute and I are lords of more  
Than thrice this kingdom's fee."

And the third Leaf sang, "Be mine! Be mine!"

And ever it sang, "Be mine!"  
Then sweeter it sang and ever sweeter,  
And said, "I am thine, thine, thine!"

At the first Leaf she grew pale enough,  
At the second she turned aside,  
At the third, 't was as if a lily flushed  
With a rose's red heart's tide.

"Good counsel gave the bird," said she,  
"I have my hope thrice o'er,  
For they sing to my very heart," she said,  
"And it sings to them evermore."

She brought to him her beauty and truth,  
But and broad earldoms three,  
And he made her queen of the broader lands  
He held of his lute in fee.

### SEAWEED

Nor always unimpeded can I pray,  
Nor, pitying saint, thine intercession claim;  
Too closely clings the burden of the day,  
And all the mint and anise that I pay  
But swells my debt and deepens my self-blame.

Shall I less patience have than Thou, who know

That Thou revisit'st all who wait for thee,  
Nor only fill'st the unsounded deeps below,

But dost refresh with punctual overflow  
The rifts where unregarded mosses be?

The drooping seaweed hears, in night  
abyssed,  
Far and more far the wave's receding  
shocks,

Nor doubts, for all the darkness and the mist,

That the pale shepherdess will keep her  
tryst,

And shoreward lead again her foam-fleeced  
flocks.

For the same wave that rims the Carib  
shore

With momentary brede of pearl and gold,  
Goes hurrying thence to gladden with its  
roar

Lorn weeds bound fast on rocks of Labra-  
dor,

By love divine on one sweet errand rolled.

And, though Thy healing waters far with-  
draw,

I, too, can wait and feed on hope of Thee  
And of the dear recurrence of Thy law,  
Sure that the parting grace my morning  
saw

Abides its time to come in search of me.

### THE FINDING OF THE LYRE

THERE lay upon the ocean's shore  
What once a tortoise served to cover;  
A year and more, with rush and roar,  
The surf had rolled it over,  
Had played with it, and flung it by,  
As wind and weather might decide it,  
Then tossed it high where sand-drifts dry  
Cheap burial might provide it.

It rested there to bleach or tan,  
The rains had soaked, the suns had burned  
it;

With many a ban the fisherman  
Had stumbled o'er and spurned it;  
And there the fisher-girl would stay,  
Conjecturing with her brother  
How in their play the poor estray  
Might serve some use or other.

So there it lay, through wet and dry  
As empty as the last new sonnet,  
Till by and by came Mercury,  
And, having mused upon it,  
"Why, here," cried he, "the thing of  
things

In shape, material, and dimension!  
Give it but strings, and, lo, it sings,  
A wonderful invention!"

So said, so done; the chords he strained,  
And, as his fingers o'er them hovered,  
The shell disdained a soul had gained,  
The lyre had been discovered.  
O empty world that round us lies,  
Dead shell, of soul and thought forsaken,



Brought we but eyes like Mercury's,  
In thee what songs should waken !

## NEW-YEAR'S EVE, 1850

THIS is the midnight of the century,—  
hark !  
Through aisle and arch of Godminster have  
gone  
Twelve throbs that tolled the zenith of the  
dark,  
And mornward now the starry hands move  
on;  
"Mornward !" the angelic watchers say,  
"Passed is the sorest trial;  
No plot of man can stay  
The hand upon the dial;  
Night is the dark stem of the lily Day."

If we, who watched in valleys here below,  
Toward streaks, misdeemed of morn, our  
faces turned  
When volcan glares set all the east aglow,  
We are not poorer that we wept and  
yearned;  
Though earth swing wide from God's in-  
tent,  
And though no man nor nation  
Will move with full consent  
In heavenly gravitation,  
Yet by one Sun is every orbit bent.

## FOR AN AUTOGRAPH

THOUGH old the thought and oft exprest,  
'T is his at last who says it best, —  
I'll try my fortune with the rest.

Life is a leaf of paper white  
Whereon each one of us may write  
His word or two, and then comes night.

"Lo, time and space enough," we cry,  
"To write an epic !" so we try  
Our nibs upon the edge, and die.

Muse not which way the pen to hold,  
Luck hates the slow and loves the bold,  
Soon come the darkness and the cold.

Greatly begin ! though thou have time  
But for a line, be that sublime, —  
Not failure, but low aim, is crime.

Ah, with what lofty hope we came !  
But we forget it, dream of fame,  
And scrawl, as I do here, a name.

## AL FRESCO

THE dandelions and buttercups  
Gild all the lawn; the drowsy bee  
Stumbles among the clover-tops,  
And summer sweetens all but me:  
Away, unfruitful lore of books,  
For whose vain idiom we reject  
The soul's more native dialect,  
Aliens among the birds and brooks,  
Dull to interpret or conceive  
What gospels lost the woods retrieve !  
Away, ye critics, city-bred,  
Who springes set of thus and so,  
And in the first man's footsteps tread,  
Like those who toil through drifted snow !  
Away, my poets, whose sweet spell  
Can make a garden of a cell !  
I need ye not, for I to-day  
Will make one long sweet verse of play.

Snap, chord of manhood's tenser strain !  
To-day I will be a boy again;  
The mind's pursuing element,  
Like a bow slackened and unbent,  
In some dark corner shall be leant.  
The robin sings, as of old, from the limb !  
The cat-bird croons in the lilac-bush !  
Through the dim arbor, himself more dim,  
Silently hops the hermit-thrush,  
The withered leaves keep dumb for him;  
The irreverent buccaneering bee  
Hath stormed and rifled the nunnery  
Of the lily, and scattered the sacred floor  
With haste-dropt gold from shrine to  
door;  
There, as of yore,  
The rich, milk-tingeing buttercup  
Its tiny polished urn holds up,  
Filled with ripe summer to the edge,  
The sun in his own wine to pledge;  
And our tall elm, this hundredth year  
Doge of our leafy Venice here,  
Who, with an annual ring, doth wed  
The blue Adriatic overhead,  
Shadows with his palatial mass  
The deep canals of flowing grass.

O unestrang'd birds and bees !  
O face of Nature always true !

O never-unsympathizing trees !  
 O never-rejecting roof of blue,  
 Whose rash disherison never falls  
 On us unthinking prodigals,  
 Yet who convictest all our ill,  
 So grand and unappeasable !  
 Methinks my heart from each of these  
 Plucks part of childhood back again,  
 Long there imprisoned, as the breeze  
 Doth every hidden odor seize  
 Of wood and water, hill and plain ;  
 Once more am I admitted peer  
 In the upper house of Nature here,  
 And feel through all my pulses run  
 The royal blood of wind and sun.

Upon these elm-arched solitudes  
 No hum of neighbor toil intrudes ;  
 The only hammer that I hear  
 Is wielded by the woodpecker,  
 The single noisy calling his  
 In all our leaf-hid Sybaris ;  
 The good old time, close-hidden here,  
 Persists, a loyal cavalier,  
 While Roundheads prim, with point of fox,  
 Probe wainscot-chink and empty box ;  
 Here no hoarse-voiced iconoclast  
 Insults thy statues, royal Past ;  
 Myself too prone the axe to wield,  
 I touch the silver side of the shield  
 With lance reversed, and challenge peace,  
 A willing convert of the trees.

How chanced it that so long I tost  
 A cable's length from this rich coast,  
 With foolish anchors hugging close  
 The beckoning weeds and lazy ooze,  
 Nor had the wit to wreck before  
 On this enchanted island's shore,  
 Whither the current of the sea,  
 With wiser drift, persuaded me ?

Oh, might we but of such rare days  
 Build up the spirit's dwelling-place !  
 A temple of so Parian stone  
 Would brook a marble god alone,  
 The statue of a perfect life,  
 Far-shrined from earth's bestaining strife.  
 Alas ! though such felicity  
 In our vext world here may not be,  
 Yet, as sometimes the peasant's hut  
 Shows stones which old religion cut  
 With text inspired, or mystic sign  
 Of the Eternal and Divine,  
 Torn from the consecration deep

Of some fallen nunnery's mossy sleep,  
 So, from the ruins of this day  
 Crumbling in golden dust away,  
 The soul one gracious block may draw,  
 Carved with some fragment of the law,  
 Which, set in life's prosaic wall,  
 Old benedictions may recall,  
 And lure some nunlike thoughts to take  
 Their dwelling here for memory's sake.

## MASACCIO

### IN THE BRANCACCI CHAPEL

HE came to Florence long ago,  
 And painted here these walls, that shone  
 For Raphael and for Angelo,  
 With secrets deeper than his own,  
 Then shrank into the dark again,  
 And died, we know not how or when.

The shadows deepened, and I turned  
 Half sadly from the fresco grand ;  
 " And is this," mused I, " all ye earned,  
 High-vaulted brain and cunning hand,  
 That ye to greater men could teach  
 The skill yourselves could never reach ? "

" And who were they," I mused, " that  
 wrought  
 Through pathless wilds, with labor long,  
 The highways of our daily thought ?  
 Who reared those towers of earliest song  
 That lift us from the crowd to peace  
 Remote in sunny silences ? "

Out clanged the Ave Mary bells,  
 And to my heart this message came :  
 Each clamorous throat among them tells  
 What strong-souled martyrs died in flame  
 To make it possible that thou  
 Shouldst here with brother sinners bow.

Thoughts that great hearts once broke for,  
 we  
 Breathe cheaply in the common air ;  
 The dust we trample heedlessly  
 Throbbled once in saints and heroes rare,  
 Who perished, opening for their race  
 New pathways to the commonplace.

Henceforth, when rings the health to those  
 Who live in story and in song,  
 O nameless dead, that now repose

Safe in Oblivion's chambers strong,  
One cup of recognition true  
Shall silently be drained to you !

## WITHOUT AND WITHIN

"Madrid, January 15, 1879. I wrote some verses thirty odd years ago called *Without and Within*, and they originally ended with the author's looking up at the stars through six feet of earth and feeling dreadfully bored, while a passer-by deciphers the headstone and envies the supposed sleeper beneath. I was persuaded to leave out this ending as too grim — but I often think of it. They have a fine name for this kind of feeling nowadays, and would fain make out pessimism to be a monstrous birth of our century. I suspect it has always been common enough, especially with naughty children who get tired of their playthings as soon as I do — the absurdity being that then we are not content with smashing the toy which turns out to be finite — but everything else into the bargain." J. R. L. to Miss Grace Norton. *Letters* II. 236.

My coachman, in the moonlight there,  
Looks through the side-light of the door;  
I hear him with his brethren swear,  
As I could do, — but only more.

Flattening his nose against the pane,  
He envies me my brilliant lot,  
Breathes on his aching fists in vain,  
And dooms me to a place more hot.

He sees me in to supper go,  
A silken wonder by my side,  
Bare arms, bare shoulders, and a row  
Of flounces, for the door too wide.

He thinks how happy is my arm  
'Neath its white-gloved and jewelled  
load;  
And wishes me some dreadful harm,  
Hearing the merry corks explode.

Meanwhile I inly curse the bore  
Of hunting still the same old coon,  
And envy him, outside the door,  
In golden quiet of the moon.

The winter wind is not so cold  
As the bright smile he sees me win,  
Nor the host's oldest wine so old  
As our poor gabble sour and thin.

I envy him the ungyved prance  
With which his freezing feet he warms,  
And drag my lady's-chains and dance  
The galley-slave of dreary forms.

Oh, could he have my share of din,  
And I his quiet ! — past a doubt  
'T would still be one man bored within,  
And just another bored without.

Nay, when, once paid my mortal fee,  
Some idler on my headstone grim  
Traces the moss-blurred name, will he  
Think me the happier, or I him ?

## GODMINSTER CHIMES

WRITTEN IN AID OF A CHIME OF BELLS  
FOR CHRIST CHURCH, CAMBRIDGE

GODMINSTER ? Is it Fancy's play ?  
I know not, but the word  
Sings in my heart, nor can I say  
Whether 't was dreamed or heard;  
Yet fragrant in my mind it clings  
As blossoms after rain,  
And builds of half-remembered things  
This vision in my brain.

Through aisles of long-drawn centuries  
My spirit walks in thought,  
And to that symbol lifts its eyes  
Which God's own pity wrought;  
From Calvary shines the altar's gleam,  
The Church's East is there,  
The Ages one great minster seem,  
That throbs with praise and prayer.

And all the way from Calvary down  
The carven pavement shows  
Their graves who won the martyr's crown  
And safe in God repose;  
The saints of many a warring creed  
Who now in heaven have learned  
That all paths to the Father lead  
Where Self the feet have spurned.

And, as the mystic aisles I pace,  
By aureoled workmen built,  
Lives ending at the Cross I trace  
Alike through grace and guilt;  
One Mary bathes the blessed feet  
With ointment from her eyes,

With spikenard one, and both are sweet,  
For both are sacrifice.

Moravian hymn and Roman chant  
In one devotion blend,  
To speak the soul's eternal want  
Of Him, the inmost friend;  
One prayer soars cleansed with martyr  
fire,  
One choked with sinner's tears,  
In heaven both meet in one desire,  
And God one music hears.

Whilst thus I dream, the bells clash out  
Upon the Sabbath air,  
Each seems a hostile faith to shout,  
A selfish form of prayer;  
My dream is shattered, yet who knows  
But in that heaven so near  
These discords find harmonious close  
In God's atoning ear ?

O chime of sweet Saint Charity,  
Peal soon that Easter morn  
When Christ for all shall risen be,  
And in all hearts new-born !  
That Pentecost when utterance clear  
To all men shall be given,  
When all shall say *My Brother* here,  
And hear *My Son* in heaven !

### THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

WHO hath not been a poet ? Who hath not,  
With life's new quiver full of winged  
years,  
Shot at a venture, and then, following on,  
Stood doubtful at the Parting of the Ways ?

There once I stood in dream, and as I  
paused,  
Looking this way and that, came forth  
to me

The figure of a woman veiled, that said,  
"My name is Duty, turn and follow me ;"  
Something there was that chilled me in  
her voice ;

I felt Youth's hand grow slack and cold in  
mine,

As if to be withdrawn, and I exclaimed:  
"Oh, leave the hot wild heart within my  
breast !

Duty comes soon enough, too soon comes  
Death ;

This slippery globe of life whirls of itself,  
Hasting our youth away into the dark ;  
These senses, quivering with electric heats,  
Too soon will show, like nests on wintry  
boughs

Obtrusive emptiness, too palpable wreck,  
Which whistling north-winds line with  
downy snow

Sometimes, or fringe with foliaged rime,  
in vain,  
Thither the singing birds no more return."

Then glowed to me a maiden from the  
left,

With bosom half disclosed, and naked  
arms

More white and undulant than necks of  
swans ;

And all before her steps an influence ran  
Warm as the whispering South that opens  
buds

And swells the laggard sails of Northern  
May.

"I am called Pleasure, come with me!"  
she said,

Then laughed, and shook out sunshine from  
her hair,

Nor only that, but, so it seemed, shook out  
All memory too, and all the moonlit past,  
Old loves, old aspirations, and old dreams,  
More beautiful for being old and gone.

So we two went together; downward  
sloped

The path through yellow meads, or so I  
dreamed,

Yellow with sunshine and young green,  
but I

Saw naught nor heard, shut up in one close  
joy ;

I only felt the hand within my own,  
Transmuting all my blood to golden fire,  
Dissolving all my brain in throbbing mist.

Suddenly shrank the hand; suddenly burst  
A cry that split the torpor of my brain,  
And as the first sharp thrust of lightning  
loosens

From the heaped cloud its rain, loosened  
my sense:

"Save me !" it thrilled; "oh, hide me !  
there is Death !

Death the divider, the unmerciful,  
That digs his pitfalls under Love and  
Youth,



And covers Beauty up in the cold ground;  
Horrible Death! bringer of endless dark;  
Let him not see me! hide me in thy  
breast!"

Thereat I strove to clasp her, but my arms  
Met only what slipped crumbling down,  
and fell,

A handful of gray ashes, at my feet.

I would have fled, I would have followed  
back

That pleasant path we came, but all was  
changed;

Rocky the way, abrupt, and hard to find;  
Yet I toiled on, and, toiling on, I thought,  
"That way lies Youth, and Wisdom, and  
all Good;

For only by unlearning Wisdom comes  
And climbing backward to diviner Youth;  
What the world teaches profits to the  
world,

What the soul teaches profits to the soul,  
Which then first stands erect with God-  
ward face,

When she lets fall her pack of withered  
facts,

The gleanings of the outward eye and  
ear,

And looks and listens with her finer sense;  
Nor Truth nor Knowledge cometh from  
without."

After long, weary days I stood again  
And waited at the Parting of the Ways;  
Again the figure of a woman veiled  
Stood forth and beckoned, and I followed  
now:

Down to no bower of roses led the path,  
But through the streets of towns where  
chattering Cold

Hewed wood for fires whose glow was  
owned and fenced,

Where Nakedness wove garments of warm  
wool

Not for itself;—or through the fields it  
led

Where Hunger reaped the unattainable  
grain,

Where idleness enforced saw idle lands,  
Leagues of unpeopled soil, the common  
earth,

Walled round with paper against God and  
Man.

"I cannot look," I groaned, "at only  
these;

The heart grows hardened with perpetual  
wont,

And palters with a feigned necessity,  
Bargaining with itself to be content;  
Let me behold thy face."

The Form replied:

"Men follow Duty, never overtake;  
Duty nor lifts her veil nor looks behind."  
But, as she spake, a loosened lock of hair  
Slipped from beneath her hood, and I, who  
looked

To see it gray and thin, saw amplest gold;  
Not that dull metal dug from sordid earth,  
But such as the retiring sunset flood  
Leaves heaped on bays and capes of island  
cloud.

"O Guide divine," I prayed, "although not  
yet

I may repair the virtue which I feel  
Gone out at touch of untuned things and  
foul

With draughts of Beauty, yet declare how  
soon!"

"Faithless and faint of heart," the voice  
returned,

"Thou seest no beauty save thou make it  
first;

Man, Woman, Nature each is but a glass  
Where the soul sees the image of herself,  
Visible echoes, offsprings of herself.  
But, since thou need'st assurance of how  
soon,

Wait till that angel comes who opens all,  
The reconciler, he who lifts the veil,  
The reuniter, the rest-bringer, Death."

I waited, and methought he came; but  
how,

Or in what shape, I doubted, for no sign,  
By touch or mark, he gave me as he  
passed:

Only I knew a lily that I held  
Snapt short below the head and shrivelled  
up;

Then turned my Guide and looked at me  
unveiled,

And I beheld no face of matron stern,  
But that enchantment I had followed erst,  
Only more fair, more clear to eye and brain,  
Heightened and chastened by a household  
charm;

She smiled, and "Which is fairer," said  
her eyes,

"The hag's unreal Florimel or mine?"

## ALADDIN

WHEN I was a beggarly boy,  
 And lived in a cellar damp,  
 I had not a friend nor a toy,  
 But I had Aladdin's lamp;  
 When I could not sleep for the cold,  
 I had fire enough in my brain,  
 And builded, with roofs of gold,  
 My beautiful castles in Spain!

Since then I have toiled day and night,  
 I have money and power good store,  
 But I'd give all my lamps of silver bright  
 For the one that is mine no more;  
 Take, Fortune, whatever you choose,  
 You gave, and may snatch again;  
 I have nothing 't would pain me to lose,  
 For I own no more castles in Spain!

## AN INVITATION

TO J[OHN] F[RANCIS] H[EATH]

NINE years have slipt like hour-glass sand  
 From life's still-emptying globe away,  
 Since last, dear friend, I clasped your  
 hand,

And stood upon the impoverished land,  
 Watching the steamer down the bay.

I held the token which you gave,  
 While slowly the smoke-pennon curled  
 O'er the vague rim 'tween sky and wave,  
 And shut the distance like a grave,  
 Leaving me in the colder world;

The old, worn world of hurry and heat,  
 The young, fresh world of thought and  
 scope;

While you, where beckoning billows fleet  
 Climb far sky-beaches still and sweet,  
 Sank wavering down the ocean-slope.

You sought the new world in the old,  
 I found the old world in the new,  
 All that our human hearts can hold,  
 The inward world of deathless mould,  
 The same that Father Adam knew.

He needs no ship to cross the tide,  
 Who, in the lives about him, sees  
 Fair window-prospects opening wide

O'er history's fields on every side,  
 To Ind and Egypt, Rome and Greece.

Whatever moulds of various brain  
 E'er shaped the world to weal or woe,  
 Whatever empires' wax and wane,  
 To him that hath not eyes in vain,  
 Our village-microcosm can show.

Come back our ancient walks to tread,  
 Dear haunts of lost or scattered friends,  
 Old Harvard's scholar-factories red,  
 Where song and smoke and laughter sped  
 The nights to proctor-haunted ends.

Constant are all our former loves,  
 Unchanged the icehouse-girdled pond,  
 Its hemlock glooms, its shadowy coves,  
 Where floats the coot and never moves,  
 Its slopes of long-tamed green beyond.

Our old familiars are not laid,  
 Though snapt our wands and sunk our  
 books;

They beckon, not to be gainsaid,  
 Where, round broad meads that mowers  
 wade,

The Charles his steel-blue sickle crooks.

Where, as the cloudburges eastward blow,  
 From glow to gloom the hillsides shift  
 Their plumps of orchard-trees arow,  
 Their lakes of rye that wave and flow,  
 Their snowy whiteweed's summer drift.

There have we watched the West unfurl  
 A cloud Byzantium newly born,  
 With flickering spires and domes of pearl,  
 And vapory surfs that crowd and curl  
 Into the sunset's Golden Horn.

There, as the flaming occident  
 Burned slowly down to ashes gray,  
 Night pitched o'erhead her silent tent,  
 And glimmering gold from Hesper sprent  
 Upon the darkened river lay,

Where a twin sky but just before  
 Deepened, and double swallows skimmed,  
 And from a visionary shore  
 Hung visioned trees, that more and more  
 Grew dusk as those above were dimmed.

Then eastward saw we slowly grow  
 Clear-edged the lines of roof and spire,

While great elm-masses blacken slow,  
And linden-ricks their round heads show  
Against a flush of widening fire.

Doubtful at first and far away,  
The moon-flood creeps more wide and  
wide;

Up a ridged beach of cloudy gray,  
Curved round the east as round a bay,  
It slips and spreads its gradual tide.

Then suddenly, in lurid mood,  
The disk looms large o'er town and field  
As upon Adam, red like blood,  
'Tween him and Eden's happy wood,  
Glared the commissioned angel's shield.

Or let us seek the seaside, there  
To wander idly as we list,  
Whether, on rocky headlands bare,  
Sharp cedar-horns, like breakers, tear  
The trailing fringes of gray mist,

Or whether, under skies full flown,  
The brightening surfs, with foamy din,  
Their breeze-caught forelocks backward  
blown,  
Against the beach's yellow zone  
Curl slow, and plunge forever in.

And, as we watch those canvas towers  
That lean along the horizon's rim,  
"Sail on," I'll say; "may sunniest hours  
Convoy you from this land of ours,  
Since from my side you bear not him!"

For years thrice three, wise Horace said,  
A poem rare let silence bind;  
And love may ripen in the shade,  
Like ours, for nine long seasons laid  
In deepest arches of the mind.

Come back! Not ours the Old World's  
good,  
The Old World's ill, thank God, not ours;  
But here, far better understood,  
The days enforce our native mood,  
And challenge all our manlier powers.

Kindlier to me the place of birth  
That first my tottering footsteps trod;  
There may be fairer spots of earth,  
But all their glories are not worth  
The virtue in the native sod.

Thence climbs an influence more benign  
Through pulse and nerve, through heart  
and brain;  
Sacred to me those fibres fine  
That first clasped earth. Oh, ne'er be  
mine  
The alien sun and alien rain!

These nourish not like homelier glows  
Or waterings of familiar skies,  
And nature fairer blooms bestows  
On the heaped hush of wintry snows,  
In pastures dear to childhood's eyes,

Than where Italian earth receives  
The partial sunshine's ampler boons,  
Where vines carve friezes 'neath the eaves,  
And, in dark firmaments of leaves,  
The orange lifts its golden moons.

### THE NOMADES

WHAT Nature makes in any mood  
To me is warranted for good,  
Though long before I learned to see  
She did not set us moral theses,  
And scorned to have her sweet caprices  
Strait-waistcoated in you or me.

I, who take root and firmly cling,  
Thought fixedness the only thing;  
Why Nature made the butterflies,  
(Those dreams of wings that float and  
hover  
At noon the slumberous poppies over,)  
Was something hidden from mine eyes,

Till once, upon a rock's brown bosom,  
Bright as a thorny cactus-blossom,  
I saw a butterfly at rest;  
Then first of both I felt the beauty;  
The airy whim, the grim-set duty,  
Each from the other took its best.

Clearer it grew than winter sky  
That Nature still had reasons why;  
And, shifting sudden as a breeze,  
My fancy found no satisfaction,  
No antithetic sweet attraction,  
So great as in the Nomades.

Seythians, with Nature not at strife,  
Light Arabs of our complex life,  
They build no houses, plant no mills

To utilize Time's sliding river,  
Content that it flow waste forever,  
If they, like it, may have their wills.

An hour they pitch their shifting tents  
In thoughts, in feelings, and events ;  
Beneath the palm-trees, on the grass,  
They sing, they dance, make love, and  
chatter,  
Vex the grim temples with their clatter,  
And make Truth's fount their looking-  
glass.

A picnic life ; from love to love,  
From faith to faith they lightly move,  
And yet, hard-eyed philosopher,  
The flightiest maid that ever hovered  
To me your thought-webs fine discovered,  
No lens to see them through like her.

So witchingly her finger-tips  
To Wisdom, as away she trips,  
She kisses, waves such sweet farewells  
To Duty, as she laughs "To-morrow !"  
That both from that mad contrast borrow  
A perfectness found nowhere else.

The beach-bird on its pearly verge  
Follows and flies the whispering surge,  
While, in his tent, the rock-stayed shell  
Awaits the flood's star-timed vibrations,  
And both, the flutter and the patience,  
The sauntering poet loves them well.

Fulfil so much of God's decree  
As works its problem out in thee,  
Nor dream that in thy breast alone  
The conscience of the changeable seasons,  
The Will that in the planets reasons  
With space-wide logic, has its throne.

Thy virtue makes not vice of mine,  
Unlike, but none the less divine ;  
Thy toil adorns, not chides, my play ;  
Nature of sameness is so chary,  
With such wild whim the freakish fairy  
Picks presents for the christening-day.

#### SELF-STUDY

A PRESENCE both by night and day,  
That made my life seem just begun,  
Yet scarce a presence, rather say  
The warning aureole of one.

And yet I felt it everywhere ;  
Walked I the woodland's aisles along,  
It seemed to brush me with its hair ;  
Bathed I, I heard a mermaid's song.

How sweet it was ! A buttercup  
Could hold for me a day's delight,  
A bird could lift my fancy up  
To ether free from cloud or blight.

Who was the nymph ? Nay, I will see,  
Methought, and I will know her near ;  
If such, divined, her charm can be,  
Seen and possessed, how triply dear !

So every magic art I tried,  
And spells as numberless as sand,  
Until, one evening, by my side  
I saw her glowing fulness stand.

I turned to clasp her, but "Farewell,"  
Parting she sighed, "we meet no more ;  
Not by my hand the curtain fell  
That leaves you conscious, wise, and poor.

"Since you have found me out, I go ;  
Another lover I must find,  
Content his happiness to know,  
Nor strive its secret to unwind."

#### PICTURES FROM APPLIEDORE

In 1854 Lowell contributed to *The Crayon*, then just started by W. J. Stillman, a poem, *My Appledore Gallery*, which reappears in part in the following poem under a slightly changed title. In sending the first portion to Mr. Stillman, he wrote : "You may add a note, if you like, saying that Appledore is one of the Isles of Shoals, off Portsmouth, N. H., discovered by the great Captain Smith, and once named after him. A cairn on the apex of Appledore is said to be of his building."

#### I

A HEAP of bare and splintery crags  
Tumbled about by lightning and frost,  
With rifts and chasms and storm-bleached  
jags,  
That wait and growl for a ship to be lost ;  
No island, but rather the skeleton  
Of a wrecked and vengeance-smitten one,  
Where, æons ago, with half-shut eye,  
The sluggish saurian crawled to die,  
Gasping under titanic ferns ;



Ribs of rock that seaward jut,  
 Granite shoulders and boulders and snags,  
 Round which, though the winds in heaven  
     be shut,  
 The nightmared ocean murmurs and yearns,  
 Welters, and swashes, and tosses, and turns,  
 And the dreary black seaweed lolls and  
     wags;  
 Only rock from shore to shore,  
 Only a moan through the bleak clefts  
     blown,  
 With sobs in the rifts where the coarse kelp  
     shifts,  
 Falling and lifting, tossing and drifting,  
 And under all a deep, dull roar,  
 Dying and swelling, forevermore, —  
 Rock and moan and roar alone,  
 And the dread of some nameless thing un-  
     known,  
 These make Appledore.

These make Appledore by night:  
 Then there are monsters left and right;  
 Every rock is a different monster;  
 All you have read of, fancied, dreamed,  
 When you waked at night because you  
     screamed,  
 There they lie for half a mile,  
 Jumbled together in a pile,  
 And (though you know they never once  
     stir)  
 If you look long, they seem to be moving  
 Just as plainly as plain can be,  
 Crushing and crowding, wading and shov-  
     ing  
 Out into the awful sea,  
 Where you can hear them snort and spout  
 With pauses between, as if they were listen-  
     ing,  
 Then tumult anon when the surf breaks  
     glistening  
 In the blackness where they wallow about.

## II

All this you would scarcely comprehend,  
 Should you see the isle on a sunny day;  
 Then it is simple enough in its way, —  
 Two rocky bulges, one at each end,  
 With a smaller bulge and a hollow between;  
 Patches of whortleberry and bay;  
 Accidents of open green,  
 Sprinkled with loose slabs square and gray,  
 Like graveyards for ages deserted; a few  
 Unsocial thistles; an elder or two,  
 Foamed over with blossoms white as spray;

And on the whole island never a tree  
 Save a score of sumachs, high as your knee,  
 That crouch in hollows where they may,  
 (The cellars where once stood a village,  
     men say,)  
 Huddling for warmth, and never grew  
 Tall enough for a peep at the sea;  
 A general dazzle of open blue;  
 A breeze always blowing and playing rat-  
     tat  
 With the bow of the ribbon round your hat;  
 A score of sheep that do nothing but stare  
 Up or down at you everywhere;  
 Three or four cattle that chew the cud  
 Lying about in a listless despair;  
 A medrick that makes you look overhead  
 With short, sharp scream, as he sights his  
     prey,  
 And, dropping straight and swift as lead,  
 Splits the water with sudden thud; —  
 This is Appledore by day.

A common island, you will say;  
 But stay a moment: only climb  
 Up to the highest rock of the isle,  
 Stand there alone for a little while,  
 And with gentle approaches it grows sub-  
     lime,  
 Dilating slowly as you win  
 A sense from the silence to take it in.  
 So wide the loneliness, so lucid the air,  
 The granite beneath you so savagely bare,  
 You well might think you were looking  
     down  
 From some sky-silenced mountain's crown,  
 Whose waist-belt of pines is wont to tear  
 Locks of wool from the topmost cloud.  
 Only be sure you go alone,  
 For Grandeur is inaccessibly proud,  
 And never yet has backward thrown  
 Her veil to feed the stare of a crowd;  
 To more than one was never shown  
 That awful front, nor is it fit  
 That she, Cothurnus-shod, stand bowed  
 Until the self-approving pit  
 Enjoy the gust of its own wit  
 In babbling plaudits cheaply loud;  
 She hides her mountains and her sea  
 From the harriers of scenery,  
 Who hunt down sunsets, and huddle and  
     bay,  
 Mouthing and mumbling the dying day.

Trust me, 't is something to be cast  
 Face to face with one's Self at last,

To be taken out of the fuss and strife,  
 The endless clatter of plate and knife,  
 The bore of books and the bores of the  
 street,  
 From the singular mess we agree to call  
 Life,  
 Where that is best which the most fools  
 vote is,  
 And planted firm on one's own two feet  
 So nigh to the great warm heart of God,  
 You almost seem to feel it beat  
 Down from the sunshine and up from the  
 sod;

To be compelled, as it were, to notice  
 All the beautiful changes and chances  
 Through which the landscape flits and  
 glances,

And to see how the face of common day  
 Is written all over with tender histories,  
 When you study it that intenser way  
 In which a lover looks at his mistress.

Till now you dreamed not what could be  
 done

With a bit of rock and a ray of sun ;  
 But look, how fade the lights and shades  
 Of keen bare edge and crevice deep !  
 How doubtfully it fades and fades,  
 And glows again, yon craggy steep,  
 O'er which, through color's dreamiest  
 grades,

The musing sunbeams pause and creep !  
 Now pink it blooms, now glimmers gray,  
 Now shadows to a filmy blue,  
 Tries one, tries all, and will not stay,  
 But flits from opal hue to hue,  
 And runs through every tenderest range  
 Of change that seems not to be change,  
 So rare the sweep, so nice the art,  
 That lays no stress on any part,  
 But shifts and lingers and persuades;  
 So soft that sun-brush in the west,  
 That asks no costlier pigments' aids,  
 But mingling knobs, flaws, angles, dints,  
 Indifferent of worst or best,  
 Enchants the cliffs with wraiths and hints  
 And gracious preludings of tints,  
 Where all seems fixed, yet all evades,  
 And indefinitely pervades  
 Perpetual movement with perpetual rest !

### III

Away northeast is Boone Island light;  
 You might mistake it for a ship,  
 Only it stands too plumb upright,

And like the others does not slip  
 Behind the sea's unsteady brink;  
 Though, if a cloud-shade chance to dip  
 Upon it a moment, 't will suddenly sink,  
 Levelled and lost in the darkened main,  
 Till the sun builds it suddenly up again,  
 As if with a rub of Aladdin's lamp.  
 On the mainland you see a misty camp  
 Of mountains pitched tumultuously:  
 That one looming so long and large  
 Is Saddleback, and that point you see  
 Over yon low and rounded marge,  
 Like the boss of a sleeping giant's targe  
 Laid over his breast, is Ossipee;  
 That shadow there may be Kearsarge;  
 That must be Great Haystack; I love  
 these names,

Wherewith the lonely farmer tames  
 Nature to mute companionship  
 With his own mind's domestic mood,  
 And strives the surly world to clip  
 In the arms of familiar habitude.  
 'T is well he could not contrive to make  
 A Saxon of Agamenticus:  
 He glowers there to the north of us,  
 Wrapt in his blanket of blue haze,  
 Unconvertibly savage, and scorns to take  
 The white man's baptism or his ways.  
 Him first on shore the coaster divines  
 Through the early gray, and sees him  
 shake

The morning mist from his scalp-lock of  
 pines;

Him first the skipper makes out in the  
 west,  
 Ere the earliest sunstreak shoots tremu-  
 lous,

Plashing with orange the palpitant lines  
 Of mutable billow, crest after crest,  
 And murmurs *Agamenticus* !  
 As if it were the name of a saint.  
 But is that a mountain playing cloud,  
 Or a cloud playing mountain, just there,  
 so faint ?

Look along over the low right shoulder  
 Of Agamenticus into that crowd  
 Of brassy thunderheads behind it;  
 Now you have caught it, but, ere you are  
 older

By half an hour, you will lose it and find it  
 A score of times; while you look 't is gone,  
 And, just as you 've given it up, anon  
 It is there again, till your weary eyes  
 Fancy they see it waver and rise,  
 With its brother clouds; it is Agiochook,

There if you seek not, and gone if you  
look,  
Ninety miles off as the eagle flies.

But mountains make not all the shore  
The mainland shows to Appledore;  
Eight miles the heaving water spreads  
To a long, low coast with beaches and  
heads

That run through unimagined mazes,  
As the lights and shades and magical hazes  
Put them away or bring them near,  
Shimmering, sketched out for thirty miles  
Between two capes that waver like threads,  
And sink in the ocean, and reappear,  
Crumbled and melted to little isles,  
With filmy trees, that seem the mere  
Half-fancies of drowsy atmosphere;  
And see the beach there, where it is  
Flat as a threshing-floor, beaten and packed  
With the flashing flails of weariless seas,  
How it lifts and looms to a precipice,  
O'er whose square front, a dream, no  
more,

The steepened sand-stripes seem to pour,  
A murmurless vision of cataract;  
You almost fancy you hear a roar,  
Fitful and faint from the distance wander-  
ing;

But 't is only the blind old ocean maunder-  
ing,

Raking the shingle to and fro,  
Aimlessly clutching and letting go  
The kelp-haired sedges of Appledore,  
Slipping down with a sleepy forgetting,  
And anon his ponderous shoulder setting,  
With a deep, hoarse pant against Apple-  
dore.

IV

Eastward as far as the eye can see,  
Still eastward, eastward, endlessly,  
The sparkle and tremor of purple sea  
That rises before you, a flickering hill,  
On and on to the shut of the sky,  
And beyond, you fancy it sloping until  
The same multitudinous throbs and thrill  
That vibrate under your dizzy eye  
In ripples of orange and pink are sent  
Where the popped sails doze on the yard,  
And the clumsy junk and proa lie  
Sunk deep with precious woods and nard,  
'Mid the palmy isles of the Orient.  
Those leaning towers of clouded white  
On the farthest brink of doubtful ocean,

That shorten and shorten out of sight,  
Yet seem on the selfsame spot to stay,  
Receding with a motionless motion,  
Fading to dubious films of gray,  
Lost, dimly found, then vanished wholly,  
Will rise again, the great world under,  
First films, then towers, then high-heaped  
clouds,  
Whose nearing outlines sharpen slowly  
Into tall ships with cobweb shrouds,  
That fill long Mongol eyes with wonder,  
Crushing the violet wave to spray  
Past some low headland of Cathay; —  
What was that sigh which seemed so near,  
Chilling your fancy to the core?  
'T is only the sad old sea you hear,  
That seems to seek forevermore  
Something it cannot find, and so,  
Sighing, seeks on, and tells its woe  
To the pitiless breakers of Appledore.

V

How looks Appledore in a storm?  
I have seen it when its crags seemed  
frantic,  
Butting against the mad Atlantic,  
When surge on surge would heap enorme,  
Cliffs of emerald topped with snow,  
That lifted and lifted, and then let go  
A great white avalanche of thunder,  
A grinding, blinding, deafening ire  
Monadnock might have trembled under;  
And the island, whose rock-roots pierce  
below  
To where they are warmed with the cen-  
tral fire,  
You could feel its granite fibres racked,  
As it seemed to plunge with a shudder  
and thrill

Right at the breast of the swooping hill,  
And to rise again snorting a cataract  
Of rage-froth from every cranny and ledge,  
While the sea drew its breath in hoarse  
and deep,  
And the next vast breaker curled its edge,  
Gathering itself for a mightier leap.

North, east, and south there are reefs and  
breakers  
You would never dream of in smooth  
weather,  
That toss and gore the sea for acres,  
Bellowing and gnashing and snarling to-  
gether;  
Look northward, where Duck Island lies,

And over its crown you will see arise,  
 Against a background of slaty skies,  
 A row of pillars still and white,  
 That glimmer, and then are gone from  
 sight,  
 As if the moon should suddenly kiss,  
 While you crossed the gusty desert by  
 night,  
 The long colonnades of Persepolis;  
 Look southward for White Island light,  
 The lantern stands ninety feet o'er the  
 tide;  
 There is first a half-mile of tumult and  
 fight,  
 Of dash and roar and tumble and fright,  
 And surging bewilderment wild and wide,  
 Where the breakers struggle left and right,  
 Then a mile or more of rushing sea,  
 And then the lighthouse slim and lone;  
 And whenever the weight of ocean is  
 thrown  
 Full and fair on White Island head,  
 A great mist-jotun you will see  
 Lifting himself up silently  
 High and huge o'er the lighthouse top,  
 With hands of wavering spray outspread,  
 Groping after the little tower,  
 That seems to shrink and shorten and  
 cower,  
 Till the monster's arms of a sudden drop,  
 And silently and fruitlessly  
 He sinks back into the sea.

You, meanwhile, where drenched you stand,  
 Awaken once more to the rush and roar,  
 And on the rock-point tighten your hand,  
 As you turn and see a valley deep,  
 That was not there a moment before,  
 Suck rattling down between you and a heap  
 Of toppling billow, whose instant fall  
 Must sink the whole island once for all,  
 Or watch the silenter, stealthier seas  
 Feeling their way to you more and more;  
 If they once should clutch you high as the  
 knees,  
 They would whirl you down like a sprig of  
 kelp,  
 Beyond all reach of hope or help; —  
 And such in a storm is Appledore.

## VI

'T is the sight of a lifetime to behold  
 The great shorn sun as you see it now,  
 Across eight miles of undulant gold  
 That widens landward, weltered and rolled,

With freaks of shadow and crimson stains;  
 To see the solid mountain brow  
 As it notches the disk, and gains and gains,  
 Until there comes, you scarce know when,  
 A tremble of fire o'er the parted lips  
 Of cloud and mountain, which vanishes;  
 then  
 From the body of day the sun-soul slips  
 And the face of earth darkens; but now the  
 strips  
 Of western vapor, straight and thin,  
 From which the horizon's swervings win  
 A grace of contrast, take fire and burn  
 Like splinters of touchwood, whose edges a  
 mould  
 Of ashes o'erfeathers; northward turn  
 For an instant, and let your eye grow cold  
 On Agamenticus, and when once more  
 You look, 't is as if the land-breeze, grow-  
 ing,  
 From the smouldering brands the film  
 were blowing,  
 And brightening them down to the very  
 core;  
 Yet they momentarily cool and dampen and  
 deaden,  
 The crimson turns golden, the gold turns  
 leaden,  
 Hardening into one black bar  
 O'er which, from the hollow heaven afar,  
 Shoots a splinter of light like diamond,  
 Half seen, half fancied; by and by  
 Beyond whatever is most beyond  
 In the uttermost waste of desert sky,  
 Grows a star;  
 And over it, visible spirit of dew, —  
 Ah, stir not, speak not, hold your breath,  
 Or surely the miracle vanisheth, —  
 The new moon, tranced in unspeakable  
 blue !  
 No frail illusion; this were true,  
 Rather, to call it the canoe  
 Hollowed out of a single pearl,  
 That floats us from the Present's whirl  
 Back to those beings which were ours,  
 When wishes were winged things like pow-  
 ers !  
 Call it not light, that mystery tender,  
 Which broods upon the brooding ocean  
 That flush of ecstasied surrender  
 To indefinable emotion,  
 That glory, mellower than a mist  
 Of pearl dissolved with amethyst,  
 Which rims Square Rock, like what they  
 paint



Of mitigated heavenly splendor  
Round the stern forehead of a Saint !

No more a vision, reddened, largened,  
The moon dips toward her mountain nest,  
And, fringing it with palest argent,  
Slow sheathes herself behind the margent  
Of that long cloud-bar in the West,  
Whose nether edge, erelong, you see  
The silvery chrism in turn anoint,  
And then the tiniest rosy point  
Touched doubtfully and timidly  
Into the dark blue's chilly strip,  
As some mute, wondering thing below,  
Awakened by the thrilling glow,  
Might, looking up, see Dian dip  
One lucent foot's delaying tip  
In Latmian fountains long ago.

Knew you what silence was before ?  
Here is no startle of dreaming bird  
That sings in his sleep, or strives to sing;  
Here is no sough of branches stirred,  
Nor noise of any living thing,  
Such as one hears by night on shore;  
Only, now and then, a sigh,  
With fickle intervals between,  
Sometimes far, and sometimes nigh,  
Such as Andromeda might have heard,  
And fancied the huge sea-beast unseen  
Turning in sleep; it is the sea  
That welters and wavers uneasily  
Round the lonely reefs of Appledore.

### THE WIND-HARP

"Your inspiration is still to you a living  
mistress — make her immortal in her prompt-  
ings and her consolations by imaging her  
truly in art. Mine looks at me with eyes of  
paler flame and beckons across a gulf. You  
came into my loneliness like an incarnate as-  
piration. And it is dreary enough sometimes,  
for a mountain-peak on whose snow your foot  
makes the first mortal print is not so lonely as  
a room full of happy faces from which one is  
missing forever. This was originally the fifth  
stanza of *The Windharp*.

O tress ! that so oft in my heart hast lain,  
Rocked to rest within rest by its thankful beating,  
Say, which is harder — to bear the pain  
Of laughter and light, or to wait in vain

'Neath the unleaved tree the impossible meeting ?  
If Death's lips be icy, Life gives, iwis,  
Some kisses more clay-cold and darkening than his !

Forgive me, but you spoke of it first." J. R. L.  
to W. J. Stillman, December 7, 1854.

I TREASURE in secret some long, fine  
hair

Of tenderest brown, but so inwardly  
golden

I half used to fancy the sunshine there,  
So shy, so shifting, so waywardly rare,

Was only caught for the moment and  
holden

While I could say *Dearest !* and kiss it,  
and then

In pity let go to the summer again.

I twisted this magic in gossamer strings

Over a wind-harp's Delphian hollow;

Then called to the idle breeze that swings

All day in the pine-tops, and clings, and  
sings

'Mid the musical leaves, and said, "Oh,  
follow

The will of those tears that deepen my  
words,

And fly to my window to waken these  
chords."

So they trembled to life, and, doubtfully

Feeling their way to my sense, sang,

"Say whether

They sit all day by the greenwood tree,

The lover and loved, as it wont to be,

When we —" But grief conquered, and  
all together

They swelled such weird murmur as haunts  
a shore

Of some planet dispeopled, — "Never-  
more !"

Then from deep in the past, as seemed to  
me,

The strings gathered sorrow and sang  
forsaken,

"One lover still waits 'neath the green-  
wood tree,

But 't is dark," and they shuddered,  
"where lieth she

Dark and cold ! Forever must one be  
taken ?"

But I groaned, "O harp of all ruth be-  
reft,

This Scripture is sadder, — 'the other  
left' !"

There murmured, as if one strove to speak,  
And tears came instead; then the sad

tones wandered

And faltered among the uncertain chords

In a troubled doubt between sorrow and words;  
 At last with themselves they questioned  
 and pondered,  
 "Hereafter? — who knoweth?" and so  
 they sighed  
 Down the long steps that lead to silence  
 and died.

## AUF WIEDERSEHEN

## SUMMER

THE little gate was reached at last,  
 Half hid in lilacs down the lane;  
 She pushed it wide, and, as she past,  
 A wistful look she backward cast,  
 And said, — "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

With hand on latch, a vision white  
 Lingered reluctant, and again  
 Half doubting if she did aright,  
 Soft as the dews that fell that night,  
 She said, — "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

The lamp's clear gleam flits up the stair;  
 I linger in delicious pain;  
 Ah, in that chamber, whose rich air  
 To breathe in thought I scarcely dare,  
 Thinks she, — "*Auf wiedersehen?*" . . .

'T is thirteen years; once more I press  
 The turf that silences the lane;  
 I hear the rustle of her dress,  
 I smell the lilacs, and — ah, yes,  
 I hear "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

Sweet piece of bashful maiden art!  
 The English words had seemed too  
 faint,  
 But these — they drew us heart to heart,  
 Yet held us tenderly apart;  
 She said, "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

## PALINODE

## AUTUMN

STILL thirteen years: 't is autumn now  
 On field and hill, in heart and brain;  
 The naked trees at evening sough;  
 The leaf to the forsaken bough  
 Sighs not, — "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

Two watched yon oriole's pendent dome,  
 That now is void, and dank with rain,  
 And one, — oh, hope more frail than foam!  
 The bird to his deserted home  
 Sings not, — "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

The loath gate swings with rusty creak;  
 Once, parting there, we played at pain;  
 There came a parting, when the weak  
 And fading lips essayed to speak  
 Vainly, — "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

Somewhere is comfort, somewhere faith,  
 Though thou in outer dark remain;  
 One sweet sad voice ennobles death,  
 And still, for eighteen centuries saith  
 Softly, — "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

If earth another grave must bear,  
 Yet heaven hath won a sweeter strain,  
 And something whispers my despair,  
 That, from an orient chamber there,  
 Floats down, "*Auf wiedersehen!*"

## AFTER THE BURIAL

Lowell's second child, Rose, died after a week's illness in the spring of 1850. Her father wrote shortly after her death to Mr. Gay: "She was very beautiful — fair, with large dark-gray eyes and fine features. Her smile was especially charming, and she was full of smiles till her sickness began. Dear little child, she had never spoken, only smiled. To show you that I am not unable to go along with you in the feeling expressed in your letter, I will copy a few verses out of my common-place book." The verses were the first form of the following poem, and will be found in the notes at the end of this volume. The poem, with its personal feeling over a universal human experience, found its way into many hearts. It "has roused," Lowell wrote in 1875, "strange echoes in men who assured me they were generally insensible to poetry. After all, the only stuff a solitary man has to spin is himself."

YES, faith is a goodly anchor;  
 When skies are sweet as a psalm,  
 At the bows it lolls so stalwart,  
 In its bluff, broad-shouldered calm.

And when over breakers to leeward  
 The tattered surges are hurled,  
 It may keep our head to the tempest,  
 With its grip on the base of the world.

But, after the shipwreck, tell me  
 What help in its iron thaws,  
 Still true to the broken hawser,  
 Deep down among sea-weed and ooze ?

In the breaking gulfs of sorrow,  
 When the helpless feet stretch out  
 And find in the deeps of darkness  
 No footing so solid as doubt,

Then better one spar of Memory,  
 One broken plank of the Past,  
 That our human heart may cling to,  
 Though hopeless of shore at last !

To the spirit its splendid conjectures,  
 To the flesh its sweet despair,  
 Its tears o'er the thin-worn locket  
 With its anguish of deathless hair !

Immortal ? I feel it and know it,  
 Who doubts it of such as she ?  
 But that is the pang's very secret, —  
 Immortal away from me.

There's a narrow ridge in the graveyard  
 Would scarce stay a child in his race,  
 But to me and my thought it is wider  
 Than the star-sown vague of Space.

Your logic, my friend, is perfect,  
 Your moral most drearly true;  
 But, since the earth clashed on *her* coffin,  
 I keep hearing that, and not you.

Console if you will, I can bear it;  
 'T is a well-meant alms of breath;  
 But not all the preaching since Adam  
 Has made Death other than Death.

It is pagan; but wait till you feel it, —  
 That jar of our earth, that dull shock  
 When the ploughshare of deeper passion  
 Tears down to our primitive rock.

Communion in spirit ! Forgive me,  
 But I, who am earthly and weak,  
 Would give all my incomes from dream-  
 land  
 For a touch of her hand on my cheek.

That little shoe in the corner,  
 So worn and wrinkled and brown,  
 With its emptiness confutes you,  
 And argues your wisdom down.

## THE DEAD HOUSE

"I have a notion that the inmates of a house should never be changed. When the first occupants go out it should be burned, and a stone set up with 'Sacred to the Memory of a Home' on it. Suppose the body were eternal, and that when one spirit went out another took the lease. How frightful the strange expression of the eyes would be ! I fancy sometimes that the look in the eyes of a familiar house changes when aliens have come into it. For certainly a dwelling adapts itself to its occupants. The front door of a hospitable man opens easily and looks broad, and you can read Welcome ! on every step that leads to it.

"I stopped there and tried to put that into verse. I have only half succeeded, and I shall not give it to you. I shall copy it and thrust it into Jane's letter." J. R. L. to C. E. Norton, August 31, 1858.

A similar fancy appears in an earlier letter to Mrs. Francis G. Shaw, to whom Lowell wrote January 11, 1853: "I spent Sunday with Edmund Quincy at Dedham, and, as I came back over the rail yesterday, I was roused from a reverie by seeing 'West Roxbury Station' written up over the door of a kind of Italian villa at which we stopped. I almost twisted my head off looking for the house on the hill. There it stood in mourning still, just as Frank painted it. The color suited my mood exactly. The eyes of the house were shut, the welcoming look it had was gone; it was dead. I am a Platonist about houses. They get to my eye a shape from the souls that inhabit them. My friends' dwellings seem as peculiar to them as their bodies, looks, and motions. People have no right to sell their dead houses; they should burn them as they used to burn corpses. . . . I have buried that house now and flung my pious handful of earth over it and set up a headstone — and I shall never look up to the hill-top again, let me pass it never so often."

HERE once my step was quickened,  
 Here beckoned the opening door,  
 And welcome thrilled from the threshold  
 To the foot it had known before.

A glow came forth to meet me  
 From the flame that laughed in the grate,  
 And shadows adance on the ceiling,  
 Danced blither with mine for a mate.

"I claim you, old friend," yawned the arm-  
 chair,

"This corner, you know, is your seat;"

"Rest your slippers on me," beamed the  
fender,

"I brighten at touch of your feet."

"We know the practised finger,"  
Said the books, "that seems like brain;"  
And the shy page rustled the secret  
It had kept till I came again.

Sang the pillow, "My down once quivered  
On nightingales' throats that flew  
Through moonlit gardens of Hafiz  
To gather quaint dreams for you."

Ah me, where the Past sowed heart's-ease,  
The Present plucks rue for us men!  
I come back: that scar unhealing  
Was not in the churchyard then.

But, I think, the house is unaltered,  
I will go and beg to look  
At the rooms that were once familiar  
To my life as its bed to a brook.

Unaltered! Alas for the sameness  
That makes the change but more!  
'T is a dead man I see in the mirrors,  
'T is his tread that chills the floor!

To learn such a simple lesson,  
Need I go to Paris and Rome,  
That the many make the household,  
But only one the home?

'T was just a womanly presence,  
An influence unexpressed,  
But a rose she had worn, on my grave-  
sod

Were more than long life with the rest!

'T was a smile, 't was a garment's rustle,  
'T was nothing that I can phrase,  
But the whole dumb dwelling grew con-  
scious,  
And put on her looks and ways.

Were it mine I would close the shutters,  
Like lids when the life is fled,  
And the funeral fire should wind it,  
This corpse of a home that is dead.

For it died that autumn morning  
When she, its soul, was borne  
To lie all dark on the hillside  
That looks over woodland and corn.

## A MOOD

I go to the ridge in the forest  
I haunted in days gone by,  
But thou, O Memory, pourest  
No magical drop in mine eye,  
Nor the gleam of the secret restorest  
That hath faded from earth and sky:  
A Presence autumnal and sober  
Invests every rock and tree,  
And the aureole of October  
Lights the maples, but darkens me.

Pine in the distance,  
Patient through sun or rain,  
Meeting with graceful persistence,  
With yielding but rooted resistance,  
The northwind's wrench and strain,  
No memory of past existence  
Brings thee pain;  
Right for the zenith heading,  
Friendly with heat or cold,  
Thine arms to the influence spreading  
Of the heavens, just from of old,  
Thou only aspirest the more,  
Unregretful the old leaves shedding  
That fringed thee with music before,  
And deeper thy roots embedding  
In the grace and the beauty of yore;  
Thou sigh'st not, "Alas, I am older,  
The green of last summer is sear!"  
But loftier, hopefuller, bolder,  
Winnest broader horizons each year.

To me 't is not cheer thou art singing:  
There's a sound of the sea,  
O mournful tree,  
In thy boughs forever clinging,  
And the far-off roar  
Of waves on the shore  
A shattered vessel flinging.

As thou musest still of the ocean  
On which thou must float at last,  
And seem'st to foreknow  
The shipwreck's woe  
And the sailor wrenched from the broken  
mast,

Do I, in this vague emotion,  
This sadness that will not pass,  
Though the air throb with wings,  
And the field laughs and sings,  
Do I forebode, alas!  
The ship-building longer and wearier,



The voyage's struggle and strife,  
And then the darker and drearier  
Wreck of a broken life ?

## THE VOYAGE TO VINLAND

In the letter to Mr. Norton, quoted at the beginning of this section, reference is made to *The Voyage to Vinland*, which Lowell had some thought of making the title-poem of the volume. In the same letter he says further regarding it : " Part of [this poem], you remember, was written eighteen years ago. I meant to have made it much longer, but maybe it is better as it is. I clapt a beginning upon it, patched it in the middle, and then got to what has always been my favorite part of the plan. This was to be a prophecy by Gudrida, a woman who went with them, of the future America. I have written in an unrhymed alliterated measure, in very short verse and stanzas of five lines each. It does not aim at following the law of the Icelandic alliterated stave, but hints at it and also at the *asonante*, without being properly either. But it runs well and is melodious, and we think it pretty good here, as does also Howells. Well, after that, of course, I was all for alliteration." The poem had apparently first borne the title of *Leif's Voyage*, as he writes of that poem to Mr. Briggs in 1850.

## I

## BIÖRN'S BECKONERS

Now Biörn, the son of Heriulf, had ill days  
Because the heart within him seethed with  
blood

That would not be allayed with any toil,  
Whether of war or hunting or the oar,  
But was unhungered for some joy untried:  
For the brain grew not weary with the  
limbs,

But, while they slept, still hammered like a  
Troll,

Building all night a bridge of solid dream  
Between him and some purpose of his soul,  
Or will to find a purpose. With the dawn  
The sleep-laid timbers, crumbled to soft  
mist,

Denied all foothold. But the dream re-  
mained,

And every night with yellow-bearded kings  
His sleep was haunted, — mighty men of  
old,

Once young as he, now ancient like the  
gods,

And safe as stars in all men's memories.  
Strange sagas read he in their sea-blue eyes  
Cold as the sea, grandly compassionless;  
Like life, they made him eager and then  
mocked.

Nay, broad awake, they would not let him  
be;

They shaped themselves gigantic in the  
mist,

They rose far-beckoning in the lamps of  
heaven,

They whispered invitation in the winds,  
And breath came from them, mightier than  
the wind,

To strain the lagging sails of his resolve,  
Till that grew passion which before was  
wish,

And youth seemed all too costly to be  
staked

On the soiled cards wherewith men played  
their game,

Letting Time pocket up the larger life,  
Lost with base gain of raiment, food, and  
roof.

"What helpeth lightness of the feet?"  
they said,

"Oblivion runs with swifter foot than  
they;

Or strength of sinew? New men come as  
strong,

And those sleep nameless; or renown in  
war?

Swords grave no name on the long-mem-  
oried rock

But moss shall hide it; they alone who  
wring

Some secret purpose from the unwilling  
gods

Survive in song for yet a little while  
To vex, like us, the dreams of later men,  
Ourselves a dream, and dreamlike all we  
did."

## II

## THORWALD'S LAY

So Biörn went comfortless but for his  
thought,

And by his thought the more discomforted,  
Till Eric Thurlson kept his Yule-tide feast:  
And thither came he, called among the rest,  
Silent, lone-minded, a church-door to mirth:  
But, ere deep draughts forbade such seri-  
ous song

As the grave Skald might chant nor after  
blush,

Then Eric looked at Thorwald where he sat  
Mute as a cloud amid the stormy hall,  
And said: "O Skald, sing now an olden  
song,

Such as our fathers heard who led great  
lives;

And, as the bravest on a shield is borne  
Along the waving host that shouts him king,  
So rode their thrones upon the thronging  
seas!"

Then the old man arose; white-haired he  
stood,

White-bearded, and with eyes that looked  
afar

From their still region of perpetual snow,  
Beyond the little smokes and stirs of men:  
His head was bowed with gathered flakes  
of years,

As winter bends the sea-foreboding pine,  
But something triumphed in his brow and  
eye,

Which whoso saw it could not see and  
crouch:

Loud rang the emptied beakers as he mused,  
Brooding his eyried thoughts; then, as an  
eagle

Circles smooth-winged above the wind-  
vexed woods,

So wheeled his soul into the air of song  
High o'er the stormy hall; and thus he  
sang:

"The fletcher for his arrow-shaft picks out  
Wood closest-grained, long-seasoned,  
straight as light;

And from a quiver full of such as these  
The wary Bowman, matched against his  
peers,

Long doubting, singles yet once more the  
best.

Who is it needs such flawless shafts as  
Fate?

What archer of his arrows is so choice,  
Or hits the white so surely? They are men,  
The chosen of her quiver; nor for her  
Will every reed suffice, or cross-grained  
stick

At random from life's vulgar fagot plucked:  
Such answer household ends; but she will  
have

Souls straight and clear, of toughest fibre,  
sound

Down to the heart of heart; from these she  
strips

All needless stuff, all sapwood; seasons  
them;

From circumstance untoward feathers  
plucks

Crumpled and cheap; and barbs with iron  
will:

The hour that passes is her quiver-boy:  
When she draws bow, 't is not across the  
wind,

Nor 'gainst the sun her haste-snatched  
arrow sings,

For sun and wind have plighted faith to  
her:

Ere men have heard the sinew twang, be-  
hold

In the butt's heart her trembling messen-  
ger!

"The song is old and simple that I sing;  
But old and simple are despised as cheap,  
Though hardest to achieve of human things:  
Good were the days of yore, when men  
were tried

By ring of shields, as now by ring of words;  
But while the gods are left, and hearts of  
men,

And wide-doored ocean, still the days are  
good.

Still o'er the earth hastes Opportunity,  
Seeking the hardy soul that seeks for her.  
Be not abroad, nor deaf with household  
cares

That chatter loudest as they mean the  
least;

Swift-willed is thrice-willed; late means  
nevermore;

Impatient is her foot, nor turns again."  
He ceased; upon his bosom sank his beard  
Sadly, as one who oft had seen her pass  
Nor stayed her: and forthwith the frothy  
tide

Of interrupted wassail roared along.

But Biörn, the son of Heriulf, sat apart  
Musing, and, with his eyes upon the fire,  
Saw shapes of arrows, lost as soon as seen.

"A ship," he muttered, "is a winged bridge  
That leadeth every way to man's desire,  
And ocean the wide gate to manifold luck."  
And then with that resolve his heart was  
bent,

Which, like a humming shaft, through  
many a stripe

Of day and night, across the unpathwayed  
seas

Shot the brave prow that cut on Vinland  
sands

The first rune in the Saga of the West.

## III

## GUDRIDA'S PROPHECY

Four weeks they sailed, a speck in sky-shut seas,

Life, where was never life that knew itself,  
But tumbled lubber-like in blowing whales;  
Thought, where the like had never been  
before

Since Thought primeval brooded the abyss;  
Alone as men were never in the world.

They saw the icy foundlings of the sea,  
White cliffs of silence, beautiful by day,  
Or looming, sudden-perilous, at night  
In monstrous hush; or sometimes in the dark  
The waves broke ominous with paly gleams  
Crushed by the prow in sparkles of cold fire.  
Then came green stripes of sea that promised land

But brought it not, and on the thirtieth day  
Low in the west were wooded shores like cloud.

They shouted as men shout with sudden hope;

But Biörn was silent, such strange loss there is

Between the dream's fulfilment and the dream,

Such sad abatement in the goal attained.

Then Gudrida, that was a prophetess,  
Rapt with strange influence from Atlantis,  
sang:

Her words: the vision was the dreaming shore's.

Looms there the New Land:  
Locked in the shadow  
Long the gods shut it,  
Niggards of newness  
They, the o'er-old.

Little it looks there,  
Slim as a cloud-streak;  
It shall fold peoples  
Even as a shepherd  
Foldeth his flock.

Silent it sleeps now;  
Great ships shall seek it,  
Swarming as salmon;  
Noise of its numbers  
Two seas shall hear.

Men from the Northland,  
Men from the Southland,  
Haste empty-handed;  
No more than manhood  
Bring they, and hands.

Dark hair and fair hair,  
Red blood and blue blood,  
There shall be mingled;  
Force of the ferment  
Makes the New Man.

Pick of all kindreds,  
Kings' blood shall theirs be,  
Shoots of the eldest  
Stock upon Midgard,  
Sons of the poor.

Them waits the New Land;  
They shall subdue it,  
Leaving their sons' sons  
Space for the body,  
Space for the soul.

Leaving their sons' sons  
All things save song-craft,  
Plant long in growing,  
Thrusting its tap-root  
Deep in the Gone.

Here men shall grow up  
Strong from self-helping;  
Eyes for the present  
Bring they as eagles',  
Blind to the Past.

They shall make over  
Creed, law, and custom;  
Driving-men, doughty  
Builders of empire,  
Builders of men.

Here is no singer;  
What should they sing of?  
They, the unresting?  
Labor is ugly,  
Loathsome is change.

These the old gods hate,  
Dwellers in dream-land,  
Drinking delusion  
Out of the empty  
Skull of the Past.

These hate the old gods,  
Warring against them;  
Fatal to Odin,  
Here the wolf Fenrir  
Lieth in wait.

Here the gods' Twilight  
Gathers, earth-gulging;  
Blackness of battle,  
Fierce till the Old World  
Flare up in fire.

Doubt not, my Northmen;  
Fate loves the fearless;  
Fools, when their roof-tree  
Falls, think it doomsday;  
Firm stands the sky.

Over the ruin  
See I the promise;  
Crisp waves the cornfield,  
Peace-walled, the homestead  
Waits open-doored.

There lies the New Land;  
Yours to behold it,  
Not to possess it;  
Slowly Fate's perfect  
Fulness shall come.

Then from your strong loins  
Seed shall be scattered,  
Men to the marrow,  
Wilderness tamers,  
Walkers of waves.

Jealous, the old gods  
Shut it in shadow,  
Wisely they ward it,  
Egg of the serpent,  
Bane to them all.

Stronger and sweeter  
New gods shall seek it,  
Fill it with man-folk  
Wise for the future,  
Wise from the past.

Here all is all men's,  
Save only Wisdom;  
King he that wins her;  
Him hail they helmsman,  
Highest of heart.

Might makes no master  
Here any longer;  
Sword is not swayer;  
Here e'en the gods are  
Selfish no more.

Walking the New Earth,  
Lo, a divine One  
Greeted all men godlike,  
Calls them his kindred,  
He, the Divine.

Is it Thor's hammer  
Rays in his right hand?  
Weaponless walks he;  
It is the White Christ,  
Stronger than Thor.

Here shall a realm rise  
Mighty in manhood;  
Justice and Mercy  
Here set a stronghold  
Safe without spear.

Weak was the Old World,  
Wearily war-fenced;  
Out of its ashes,  
Strong as the morning,  
Springeth the New.

Beauty of promise,  
Promise of beauty,  
Safe in the silence  
Sleep thou, till cometh  
Light to thy lids!

Thee shall awaken  
Flame from the furnace,  
Bath of all brave ones,  
Cleanser of conscience,  
Welder of will.

Lowly shall love thee,  
Thee, open-handed!  
Stalwart shall shield thee,  
Thee, worth their best blood,  
Waif of the West!

Then shall come singers,  
Singing no swan-song,  
Birth-carols, rather,  
Meet for the man child  
Mighty of bone.



# MAHMOOD THE IMAGE-BREAKER

OLD events have modern meanings; only that survives

Of past history which finds kindred in all hearts and lives.

Mahmood once, the idol-breaker, spreader of the Faith,  
Was at Sumnat tempted sorely, as the legend saith.

In the great pagoda's centre, monstrous and abhorred,  
Granite on a throne of granite, sat the temple's lord.

Mahmood paused a moment, silenced by the silent face  
That, with eyes of stone unwavering, awed the ancient place.

Then the Brahmins knelt before him, by his doubt made bold,  
Pledging for their idol's ransom countless gems and gold.

Gold was yellow dirt to Mahmood, but of precious use,  
Since from it the roots of power suck a potent juice.

"Were yon stone alone in question, this would please me well,"  
Mahmood said; "but, with the block there, I my truth must sell.

"Wealth and rule slip down with Fortune, as her wheel turns round;  
He who keeps his faith, he only cannot be discrowned.

"Little were a change of station, loss of life or crown,  
But the wreck were past retrieving if the Man fell down."

So his iron mace he lifted, smote with might and main,  
And the idol, on the pavement tumbling, burst in twain.

Luck obeys the downright striker; from the hollow core,  
Fifty times the Brahmins' offer deluged all the floor.

## INVITA MINERVA

THE Bardling came where by a river grew  
The pennoned reeds, that, as the west-wind blew,  
Gleamed and sighed plaintively, as if they knew

What music slept enchanted in each stem,  
Till Pan should choose some happy one of them,  
And with wise lips enlife it through and through.

The Bardling thought, "A pipe is all I need;  
Once I have sought me out a clear, smooth reed,  
And shaped it to my fancy, I proceed  
To breathe such strains as, yonder mid the rocks,  
The strange youth blows, that tends Admetus' flocks,  
And all the maidens shall to me pay heed."

The summer day he spent in questful round,  
And many a reed he marred, but never found  
A conjuring-spell to free the imprisoned sound;  
At last his vainly wearied limbs he laid  
Beneath a sacred laurel's flickering shade,  
And sleep about his brain her cobweb wound.

Then strode the mighty Mother through his dreams,  
Saying: "The reeds along a thousand streams  
Are mine, and who is he that plots and schemes  
To snare the melodies wherewith my breath  
Sounds through the double pipes of Life and Death,  
Atoning what to men mad discord seems?"

"He seeks not me, but I seek oft in vain  
For him who shall my voiceful reeds constrain,

And make them utter their melodious pain;  
 He flies the immortal gift, for well he  
     knows  
 His life of life must with its overflows  
 Flood the unthankful pipe, nor come again.

"Thou fool, who dost my harmless subjects  
     wrong,  
 'T is not the singer's wish that makes the  
     song:  
 The rhythmic beauty wanders dumb, how  
     long,  
 Nor stoops to any daintiest instrument,  
 Till, found its mated lips, their sweet con-  
     sent  
 Makes mortal breath than Time and Fate  
     more strong."

### THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

This poem, written apparently in the winter of 1849-50, was to have been included in the projected work, *The Nooning*.

#### I

'T is a woodland enchanted !  
 By no sadder spirit  
 Than blackbirds and thrushes,  
 That whistle to cheer it  
 All day in the bushes,  
 This woodland is haunted:  
 And in a small clearing,  
 Beyond sight or hearing  
 Of human annoyance,  
 The little fount gushes,  
 First smoothly, then dashes  
 And gurgles and flashes,  
 To the maples and ashes  
 Confiding its joyance;  
 Unconscious confiding,  
 Then, silent and glossy,  
 Slips winding and hiding  
 Through alder-stems mossy,  
 Through gossamer roots  
 Fine as nerves,  
 That tremble, as shoots  
 Through their magnetized curves  
 The allurements delicious  
 Of the water's capricious  
 Thrills, gushes, and swerves.

#### II

'T is a woodland enchanted !  
 I am writing no fiction;

And this fount, its sole daughter,  
 To the woodland was granted  
 To pour holy water  
 And win benediction;  
 In summer-noon flushes,  
 When all the wood hushes,  
 Blue dragon-flies knitting  
 To and fro in the sun,  
 With sidelong jerk flitting  
 Sink down on the rushes,  
 And, motionless sitting,  
 Hear it bubble and run,  
 Hear its low inward singing,  
 With level wings swinging  
 On green tasselled rushes,  
 To dream in the sun.

#### III

'T is a woodland enchanted !  
 The great August noonlight !  
 Through myriad rifts slanted,  
 Leaf and bole thickly sprinkles  
 With flickering gold;  
 There, in warm August gloaming,  
 With quick, silent brightenings,  
 From meadow-lands roaming,  
 The firefly twinkles  
 His fitful heat-lightnings;  
 There the magical moonlight  
 With meek, saintly glory  
 Steeps summit and wold;  
 There whippoorwills plain in the soli-  
     tudes hoary  
 With lone cries that wander  
 Now hither, now yonder,  
 Like souls doomed of old  
 To a mild purgatory;  
 But through noonlight and moonlight  
 The little fount tinkles  
 Its silver saints'-bells,  
 That no sprite ill-boding  
 May make his abode in  
 Those innocent dells.

#### IV

'T is a woodland enchanted !  
 When the phebe scarce whistles  
 Once an hour to his fellow,  
 And, where red lilies flaunted,  
 Balloons from the thistles  
 Tell summer's disasters,  
 The butterflies yellow,  
 As caught in an eddy  
 Of air's silent ocean,

Sink, waver, and steady  
 O'er goats'-beard and asters,  
 Like souls of dead flowers,  
 With aimless emotion  
 Still lingering unready  
 To leave their old bowers;  
 And the fount is no dumber,  
 But still gleams and flashes,  
 And gurgles and plashes,  
 To the measure of summer;  
 The butterflies hear it,  
 And spell-bound are holden,  
 Still balancing near it  
 O'er the goats'-beard so golden.

## V

'T is a woodland enchanted!  
 A vast silver willow,  
 I know not how planted,  
 (This wood is enchanted,  
 And full of surprises,)  
 Stands stemming a billow,  
 A motionless billow  
 Of ankle-deep mosses;  
 Two great roots it crosses  
 To make a round basin,  
 And there the Fount rises;  
 Ah, too pure a mirror  
 For one sick of error  
 To see his sad face in!  
 No dew-drop is stiller  
 In its lupin-leaf setting  
 Than this water moss-bounded;  
 But a tiny sand-pillar  
 From the bottom keeps jetting,  
 And mermaid ne'er sounded  
 Through the wreaths of a shell,  
 Down amid crimson dulces  
 In some cavern of ocean,  
 A melody sweeter  
 Than the delicate pulses,  
 The soft, noiseless metre,  
 The pause and the swell  
 Of that musical motion:  
 I recall it, not see it;  
 Could vision be clearer?  
 Half I 'm fain to draw nearer  
 Half tempted to flee it;  
 The sleeping Past wake not,  
 Beware!  
 One forward step take not,  
 Ah! break not  
 That quietude rare!  
 By my step unaffrighted  
 A thrush hops before it,

And o'er it  
 A birch hangs delighted,  
 Dipping, dipping, dipping its tremulous  
 hair;  
 Pure as the fountain, once  
 I came to the place,  
 (How dare I draw nearer?)  
 I bent o'er its mirror,  
 And saw a child's face  
 Mid locks of bright gold in it;  
 Yes, pure as this fountain once, —  
 Since, how much error!  
 Too holy a mirror  
 For the man to behold in it  
 His harsh, bearded countenance!

## VI

'T is a woodland enchanted!  
 Ah, fly unreturning!  
 Yet stay; —  
 'T is a woodland enchanted,  
 Where wonderful chances  
 Have sway;  
 Luck flees from the cold one,  
 But leaps to the bold one  
 Half-way;  
 Why should I be daunted?  
 Still the smooth mirror glances,  
 Still the amber sand dances,  
 One look, — then away!  
 O magical glass!  
 Canst keep in thy bosom  
 Shades of leaf and of blossom  
 When summer days pass,  
 So that when thy wave hardens  
 It shapes as it pleases,  
 Unharm'd by the breezes,  
 Its fine hanging gardens?  
 Hast those in thy keeping,  
 And canst not uncover,  
 Enchantedly sleeping,  
 The old shade of thy lover?  
 It is there! I have found it!  
 He wakes, the long sleeper!  
 The pool is grown deeper,  
 The sand dance is ending,  
 The white floor sinks, blending  
 With skies that below me  
 Are deepening and bending,  
 And a child's face alone  
 That seems not to know me,  
 With hair that fades golden  
 In the heaven-glow round it,  
 Looks up at my own;  
 Ah, glimpse through the portal

That leads to the throne,  
 That opes the child's olden  
 Regions Elysian!  
 Ah, too holy vision  
 For thy skirts to be holden  
 By soiled hand of mortal!  
 It wavers, it scatters,  
 'T is gone past recalling!  
 A tear's sudden falling  
 The magic cup shatters,  
 Breaks the spell of the waters,  
 And the sand cone once more,  
 With a ceaseless renewing,  
 Its dance is pursuing  
 On the silvery floor,  
 O'er and o'er,  
 With a noiseless and ceaseless renew-  
 ing.

## VII

'T is a woodland enchanted!  
 If you ask me, *Where is it?*  
 I can but make answer,  
 "'T is past my disclosing;"  
 Not to choice is it granted  
 By sure paths to visit  
 The still pool enclosing  
 Its blithe little dancer;  
 But in some day, the rarest  
 Of many Septembers,  
 When the pulses of air rest,  
 And all things lie dreaming  
 In drowsy haze steaming  
 From the wood's glowing embers,  
 Then, sometimes, unheeding,  
 And asking not whither,  
 By a sweet inward leading  
 My feet are drawn thither,  
 And, looking with awe in the magical  
 mirror,  
 I see through my tears,  
 Half doubtful of seeing,  
 The face unperturbed,  
 The warm golden being  
 Of a child of five years;  
 And spite of the mists and the error,  
 And the days overcast,  
 Can feel that I walk undeserted,  
 But forever attended  
 By the glad heavens that bended  
 O'er the innocent past;  
 Toward fancy or truth  
 Doth the sweet vision win me?  
 Dare I think that I cast

In the fountain of youth  
 The fleeting reflection  
 Of some bygone perfection  
 That still lingers in me?

## YUSSOUF

A STRANGER came one night to Yussouf's  
 tent,  
 Saying, "Behold, one outcast and in dread,  
 Against whose life the bow of power is  
 bent,  
 Who flies, and hath not where to lay his  
 head;  
 I come to thee for shelter and for food,  
 To Yussouf, called through all our tribes  
 'The Good.'"

"This tent is mine," said Yussouf, "but no  
 more  
 Than it is God's; come in and be at peace;  
 Freely shalt thou partake of all my store  
 As I of His who buildeth over these  
 Our tents his glorious roof of night and  
 day,  
 And at whose door none ever yet heard  
 Nay."

So Yussouf entertained his guest that night,  
 And, waking him ere day, said: "Here is  
 gold;  
 My swiftest horse is saddled for thy flight;  
 Depart before the prying day grow bold."  
 As one lamp lights another, nor grows  
 less,  
 So nobleness enkindleth nobleness.

That inward light the stranger's face made  
 grand,  
 Which shines from all self-conquest; kneel-  
 ing low,  
 He bowed his forehead upon Yussouf's  
 hand,  
 Sobbing: "O Sheik, I cannot leave thee  
 so;  
 I will repay thee; all this thou hast done  
 Unto that Ibrahim who slew thy son!"

"Take thrice the gold," said Yussouf, "for  
 with thee  
 Into the desert, never to return,  
 My one black thought shall ride away from  
 me;



First-born, for whom by day and night I  
yearn,  
Balanced and just are all of God's de-  
crees;  
Thou art avenged, my first-born, sleep in  
peace!"

### THE DARKENED MIND

THE fire is burning clear and blithely,  
Pleasantly whistles the winter wind;  
We are about thee, thy friends and kin-  
dred,

On us all flickers the firelight kind;  
There thou sittest in thy wonted corner  
Lone and awful in thy darkened mind.

There thou sittest; now and then thou  
moanest;

Thou dost talk with what we cannot see,  
Lookest at us with an eye so doubtful,  
It doth put us very far from thee;  
There thou sittest; we would fain be nigh  
thee,

But we know that it can never be.

We can touch thee, still we are no nearer;  
Gather round thee, still thou art alone;  
The wide chasm of reason is between us;  
Thou confutest kindness with a moan;  
We can speak to thee, and thou canst an-  
swer,

Like two prisoners through a wall of stone.

Hardest heart would call it very awful  
When thou look'st at us and seest — oh,  
what?

If we move away, thou sittest gazing  
With those vague eyes at the selfsame  
spot,

And thou mutterest, thy hands thou wring-  
est,

Seeing something, — us thou seest not.

Strange it is that, in this open bright-  
ness,

Thou shouldst sit in such a narrow cell;  
Strange it is that thou shouldst be so lone-  
some

Where those are who love thee all so  
well;

Not so much of thee is left among us  
As the hum outliving the hushed bell.

### WHAT RABBI JEHOSSA SAID

Originally written for a Fair in St. Louis.

RABBI JEHOSSA used to say  
That God made angels every day,  
Perfect as Michael and the rest  
First brooded in creation's nest,  
Whose only office was to cry  
*Hosanna!* once, and then to die;  
Or rather, with Life's essence blent,  
To be led home from banishment.

Rabbi Jehosha had the skill  
To know that Heaven is in God's will;  
And doing that, though for a space  
One heart-beat long, may win a grace  
As full of grandeur and of glow  
As Princes of the Chariot know.

'T were glorious, no doubt, to be  
One of the strong-winged Hierarchy,  
To burn with Seraphs, or to shine  
With Cherubs, deathlessly divine;  
Yet I, perhaps, poor earthly clod,  
Could I forget myself in God,  
Could I but find my nature's clue  
Simply as birds and blossoms do,  
And but for one rapt moment know  
'T is Heaven must come, not we must  
go,

Should win my place as near the throne  
As the pearl-angel of its zone,  
And God would listen mid the throng  
For my one breath of perfect song,  
That, in its simple human way,  
Said all the Host of Heaven could say.

### ALL-SAINTS

ONE feast, of holy days the crest,  
I, though no Churchman, love to keep,  
All-Saints, — the unknown good that rest  
In God's still memory folded deep;  
The bravely dumb that did their deed,  
And scorned to blot it with a name,  
Men of the plain heroic breed,  
That loved Heaven's silence more than  
fame.

Such lived not in the past alone,  
But thread to-day the unheeding street,

And stairs to Sin and Famine known  
 Sing with the welcome of their feet;  
 The den they enter grows a shrine,  
 The grimy sash an oriel burns,  
 Their cup of water warms like wine,  
 Their speech is filled from heavenly urns.

About their brows to me appears  
 An aureole traced in tenderest light,  
 The rainbow-gleam of smiles through tears  
 In dying eyes, by them made bright,  
 Of souls that shivered on the edge  
 Of that chill ford repassed no more,  
 And in their mercy felt the pledge  
 And sweetness of the farther shore.

### A WINTER-EVENING HYMN TO MY FIRE

#### I

BEAUTY on my hearth-stone blazing !  
 To-night the triple Zoroaster  
 Shall my prophet be and master:  
 To-night will I pure Magian be,  
 Hymns to thy sole honor raising,  
 While thou leapest fast and faster,  
 Wild with self-delighted glee,  
 Or sink'st low and glowest faintly  
 As an aureole still and saintly,  
 Keeping cadence to my praising  
 Thee ! still thee ! and only thee !

#### II

Elfish daughter of Apollo !  
 Thee, from thy father stolen and bound  
 To serve in Vulcan's clangorous smithy,  
 Prometheus (primal Yankee) found,  
 And, when he had tampered with thee,  
 (Too confiding little maid !)  
 In a reed's precarious hollow  
 To our frozen earth conveyed:  
 For he swore I know not what;  
 Endless ease should be thy lot,  
 Pleasure that should never falter,  
 Lifelong play, and not a duty  
 Save to hover o'er the altar,  
 Vision of celestial beauty,  
 Fed with precious woods and spices ;  
 Then, perfidious ! having got  
 Thee in the net of his devices,  
 Sold thee into endless slavery,  
 Made thee a drudge to boil the pot,  
 Thee, Helios' daughter, who dost bear  
 His likeness in thy golden hair;

Thee, by nature wild and wavery,  
 Palpitating, evanescent  
 As the shade of Dian's crescent,  
 Life, motion, gladness, everywhere !

#### III

Fathom deep men bury thee  
 In the furnace dark and still,  
 There, with dreariest mockery,  
 Making thee eat, against thy will,  
 Blackest Pennsylvanian stone;  
 But thou dost avenge thy doom,  
 For, from out thy catacomb,  
 Day and night thy wrath is blown  
 In a withering simoom,  
 And, adown that cavern drear,  
 Thy black pitfall in the floor,  
 Staggers the lusty antique cheer,  
 Despairing, and is seen no more !

#### IV

Elfish I may rightly name thee;  
 We enslave, but cannot tame thee;  
 With fierce snatches, now and then,  
 Thou pluckest at thy right again,  
 And thy down-trod instincts savage  
 To stealthy insurrection creep  
 While thy wittol masters sleep,  
 And burst in undiscovering rage:  
 Then how thou shak'st thy bacchant locks !  
 While brazen pulses, far and near,  
 Throb thick and thicker, wild with fear  
 And dread conjecture, till the drear  
 Disordered clangor every steeple rocks !

#### V

But when we make a friend of thee,  
 And admit thee to the hall  
 On our nights of festival,  
 Then, Cinderella, who could see  
 In thee the kitchen's stunted thrall ?  
 Once more a Princess lithe and tall,  
 Thou dancest with a whispering tread,  
 While the bright marvel of thy head  
 In crinkling gold floats all abroad,  
 And gloriously dost vindicate  
 The legend of thy lineage great,  
 Earth-exiled daughter of the Pythian god !  
 Now in the ample chimney-place,  
 To honor thy acknowledged race,  
 We crown thee high with laurel good,  
 Thy shining father's sacred wood,  
 Which, guessing thy ancestral right,  
 Sparkles and snaps its dumb delight,  
 And, at thy touch, poor outcast one,

Feels through its gladdened fibres go  
The tingle and thrill and vassal glow  
Of instincts loyal to the sun.

## VI

O thou of home the guardian Lar,  
And, when our earth hath wandered far  
Into the cold, and deep snow covers  
The walks of our New England lovers,  
Their sweet secluded evening-star !  
'T was with thy rays the English Muse  
Ripened her mild domestic hues;  
'T was by thy flicker that she coned  
The fireside wisdom that enrings  
With light from heaven familiar things;  
By thee she found the homely faith  
In whose mild eyes thy comfort stay'th,  
When Death, extinguishing his torch,  
Gropes for the latch-string in the porch ;  
The love that wanders not beyond  
His earliest nest, but sits and sings  
While children smooth his patient wings;  
Therefore with thee I love to read  
Our brave old poets: at thy touch how  
    stirs  
Life in the withered words ! how swift  
    recede  
Time's shadows ! and how glows again  
Through its dead mass the incandescent  
    verse,  
As when upon the anvils of the brain  
It glittering lay, cyclopically wrought  
By the fast-throbbing hammers of the  
    poet's thought !  
Thou murmurest, too, divinely stirred,  
The aspirations unattained,  
The rhythms so rathe and delicate,  
They bent and strained  
And broke, beneath the sombre weight  
Of any airiest mortal word.

## VII

What warm protection dost thou bend  
Round curtained talk of friend with friend,  
While the gray snow-storm, held aloof,  
To softest outline rounds the roof,  
Or the rude North with baffled strain  
Shoulders the frost-starred window-pane !  
Now the kind nymph to Bacchus born  
By Morpheus' daughter, she that seems  
Gifted upon her natal morn  
By him with fire, by her with dreams,  
Nicotia, dearer to the Muse  
Than all the grape's bewildering juice,  
We worship, unforbid of thee;

And, as her incense floats and curls  
In airy spires and wayward whirls,  
Or poises on its tremulous stalk  
A flower of frailest revelry,  
So winds and loiters, idly free,  
The current of unguided talk,  
Now laughter-rippled, and now caught  
In smooth, dark pools of deeper thought.  
Meanwhile thou mellowest every word,  
A sweetly unobtrusive third;  
For thou hast magic beyond wine,  
To unlock natures each to each;  
The unspoken thought thou canst divine;  
Thou fill'st the pauses of the speech  
With whispers that to dream-land reach  
And frozen fancy-springs unchain  
In Arctic outskirts of the brain :  
Sun of all inmost confidences,  
To thy rays doth the heart uncloset  
Its formal calyx of pretences,  
That close against rude day's offences,  
And open its shy midnight rose !

## VIII

Thou holdest not the master key  
With which thy Sire sets free the mystic  
    gates  
Of Past and Future: not for common fates  
Do they wide open fling,  
And, with a far-heard ring,  
Swing back their willing valves melodiously;  
Only to ceremonial days,  
And great processions of imperial song  
That set the world at gaze,  
Doth such high privilege belong:  
But thou a postern-door canst ope  
To humbler chambers of the selfsame  
    palace  
Where Memory lodges, and her sister  
    Hope,  
Whose being is but as a crystal chalice  
Which, with her various mood, the elder  
    fills  
Of joy or sorrow,  
So coloring as she wills  
With hues of yesterday the unconscious  
    morrow.

## IX

Thou sinkest, and my fancy sinks with  
    thee:  
For thee I took the idle shell,  
And struck the unused chords again,  
But they are gone who listened well;

Some are in heaven, and all are far from  
me:  
Even as I sing, it turns to pain,  
And with vain tears my eyelids throb and  
swell:  
Enough; I come not of the race  
That hawk their sorrows in the market-  
place.  
Earth stops the ears I best had loved to  
please;  
Then break, ye untuned chords, or rust in  
peace!  
As if a white-haired actor should come  
back  
Some midnight to the theatre void and  
black,  
And there rehearse his youth's great part  
Mid thin applauses of the ghosts,  
So seems it now: ye crowd upon my  
heart,  
And I bow down in silence, shadowy hosts!

### FANCY'S CASUISTRY

How struggles with the tempest's swells  
That warning of tumultuous bells!  
The fire is loose! and frantic knells  
Throb fast and faster,  
As tower to tower confusedly tells  
News of disaster.

But on my far-off solitude  
No harsh alarms can intrude;  
The terror comes to me subdued  
And charmed by distance,  
To deepen the habitual mood  
Of my existence.

Are those, I muse, the Easter chimes?  
And listen, weaving careless rhymes  
While the loud city's griefs and crimes  
Pay gentle allegiance  
To the fine quiet that sublimizes  
These dreamy regions.

And when the storm o'erwhelms the shore,  
I watch entranced as, o'er and o'er,  
The light revolves amid the roar  
So still and saintly,  
Now large and near, now more and more  
Withdrawing faintly.

This, too, despairing sailors see  
Flash out the breakers 'neath their lee

In sudden snow, then lingeringly  
Wane tow'rd eclipse,  
While through the dark the shuddering  
sea  
Gropes for the ships.

And is it right, this mood of mind  
That thus, in reverie enshrined,  
Can in the world mere topics find  
For musing stricture,  
Seeing the life of humankind  
Only as picture?

The events in line of battle go;  
In vain for me their trumpets blow  
As unto him that lieth low  
In death's dark arches,  
And through the sod hears throbbing slow  
The muffled marches.

O Duty, am I dead to thee  
In this my cloistered ecstasy,  
In this lone shallop on the sea  
That drifts tow'rd Silence?  
And are those visioned shores I see  
But sirens' islands?

My Dante frowns with lip-locked mien,  
As who would say, "T is those, I ween,  
Whom lifelong armor-chafe makes lean  
That win the laurel;"  
But where is Truth? What does it mean,  
The world-old quarrel?

Such questionings are idle air:  
Leave what to do and what to spare  
To the inspiring moment's care,  
Nor ask for payment  
Of fame or gold, but just to wear  
Unspotted raiment.

### TO MR. JOHN BARTLETT

WHO HAD SENT ME A SEVEN-POUND  
TROUT

Mr. Bartlett, the editor of *Familiar Quotations*, was a near neighbor of Lowell, and with him was long a member of a whist-party.

FIT for an Abbot of Theleme,  
For the whole Cardinals' College, or  
The Pope himself to see in dream  
Before his lenten vision gleam,  
He lies there, the sogdologer!



His precious flanks with stars besprent,  
 Worthy to swim in Castaly !  
 The friend by whom such gifts are sent,  
 For him shall bumpers full be spent,  
 His health ! be Luck his fast ally !

I see him trace the wayward brook  
 Amid the forest mysteries,  
 Where at their shades shy aspens look,  
 Or where, with many a gurgling crook,  
 It croons its woodland histories.

I see leaf-shade and sun-fleck lend  
 Their tremulous, sweet vicissitude  
 To smooth, dark pool, to crinkling bend, —  
 (Oh, stew him, Ann, as 't were your friend,  
 With amorous solicitude !)

I see him step with caution due,  
 Soft as if shod with moccasins,  
 Grave as in church, for who plies you,  
 Sweet craft, is safe as in a pew  
 From all our common stock o' sins.

The unerring fly I see him cast,  
 That as a rose-leaf falls as soft,  
 A flash ! a whirl ! he has him fast !  
 We tyros, how that struggle last  
 Confuses and appalls us oft.

Unfluttered he : calm as the sky  
 Looks on our tragi-comedies,  
 This way and that he lets him fly,  
 A sunbeam-shuttle, then to die  
 Lands him, with cool *aplomb*, at ease.

The friend who gave our board such gust,  
 Life's care may he o'erstep it half,  
 And, when Death hooks him, as he must,  
 He 'll do it handsomely, I trust,  
 And John H—— write his epitaph !

Oh, born beneath the Fishes' sign,  
 Of constellations happiest,  
 May he somewhere with Walton dine,  
 May Horace send him Massie wine,  
 And Burns Scotch drink, the nappi-  
 est !

And when they come his deeds to weigh,  
 And how he used the talents his,  
 One trout-scale in the scales he 'll lay  
 (If trout had scales), and 't will out-  
 sway  
 The wrong side of the balances.

## ODE TO HAPPINESS

SPIRIT, that rarely comest now  
 And only to contrast my gloom,  
 Like rainbow-feathered birds that bloom  
 A moment on some autumn bough  
 That, with the spurn of their farewell,  
 Sheds its last leaves, — thou once didst  
 dwell

With me year-long, and make intense  
 To boyhood's wisely vacant days  
 Their fleet but all-sufficing grace  
 Of trustful inexperience,  
 While soul could still transfigure sense,  
 And thrill, as with love's first caress,  
 At life's mere unexpectedness.

Days when my blood would leap and run  
 As full of sunshine as a breeze,  
 Or spray tossed up by Summer seas  
 That doubts if it be sea or sun !  
 Days that flew swiftly like the band  
 That played in Grecian games at strife,  
 And passed from eager hand to hand  
 The onward-dancing torch of life !

Wing-footed ! thou abid'st with him  
 Who asks it not ; but he who hath  
 Watched o'er the waves thy waning path,  
 Shall nevermore behold returning  
 Thy high-heaped canvas shoreward yearn-  
 ing !

Thou first reveal'st to us thy face  
 Turned o'er the shoulder's parting grace,  
 A moment glimpsed, then seen no  
 more, —

Thou whose swift footsteps we can trace  
 Away from every mortal door.

Nymph of the unreturning feet,  
 How may I win thee back ? But no,  
 I do thee wrong to call thee so ;  
 'T is I am changed, not thou art fleet :  
 The man thy presence feels again,  
 Not in the blood, but in the brain,  
 Spirit, that lov'st the upper air  
 Serene and passionless and rare,  
 Such as on mountain heights we find  
 And wide-viewed uplands of the mind ;  
 Or such as scorns to coil and sing  
 Round any but the eagle's wing  
 Of souls that with long upward beat  
 Have won an undisturbed retreat  
 Where, poised like winged victories,  
 They mirror in relentless eyes

The life broad-basking 'neath their  
feet,—  
Man ever with his Now at strife,  
Pained with first gasps of earthly air,  
Then praying Death the last to spare,  
Still fearful of the ampler life.

Not unto them dost thou consent  
Who, passionless, can lead at ease  
A life of unalloyed content  
A life like that of land-locked seas,  
Who feel no elemental gush  
Of tidal forces, no fierce rush  
Of storm deep-grasping scarcely spent  
'Twixt continent and continent.  
Such quiet souls have never known  
Thy truer inspiration, thou  
Who lov'st to feel upon thy brow  
Spray from the plunging vessel thrown  
Grazing the tusked lee shore, the cliff  
That o'er the abrupt gorge holds its breath,  
Where the frail hair-breadth of an *if*

Is all that sunders life and death:  
These, too, are cared for, and round these  
Bends her mild crook thy sister Peace;  
These in unvexed dependence lie,  
Each 'neath his strip of household sky;  
O'er these clouds wander, and the blue  
Hangs motionless the whole day through;  
Stars rise for them, and moons grow  
large

And lessen in such tranquil wise  
As joys and sorrows do that rise  
Within their nature's sheltered marge;  
Their hours into each other flit  
Like the leaf-shadows of the vine  
And fig-tree under which they sit,  
And their still lives to heaven incline  
With an unconscious habitude,  
Unhistoried as smokes that rise  
From happy hearths and sight elude  
In kindred blue of morning skies.

Wayward! when once we feel thy lack,  
'T is worse than vain to woo thee back!  
Yet there is one who seems to be  
Thine elder sister, in whose eyes  
A faint far northern light will rise  
Sometimes, and bring a dream of thee;  
She is not that for which youth hoped,  
But she hath blessings all her own,  
Thoughts pure as lilies newly oped,  
And faith to sorrow given alone:  
Almost I deem that it is thou  
Come back with graver matron brow,

With deepened eyes and bated breath,  
Like one that somewhere hath met Death:  
But "No," she answers, "I am she  
Whom the gods love, Tranquillity;  
That other whom you seek forlorn  
Half earthly was; but I am born  
Of the immortals, and our race  
Wears still some sadness on its face:  
He wins me late, but keeps me long,  
Who, dowered with every gift of passion,  
In that fierce flame can forge and fashion  
Of sin and self the anchor strong;  
Can thence compel the driving force  
Of daily life's mechanic course,  
Nor less the nobler energies  
Of needful toil and culture wise;  
Whose soul is worth the tempter's lure  
Who can renounce, and yet endure,  
To him I come, not lightly wooed,  
But won by silent fortitude."

## VILLA FRANCA

1859

WAIT a little: do *we* not wait?  
Louis Napoleon is not Fate,  
Francis Joseph is not Time;  
There's One hath swifter feet than Crime;  
Cannon-parliaments settle naught;  
Venice is Austria's, — whose is Thought?  
Minie is good, but, spite of change,  
Gutenberg's gun has the longest range.  
Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!  
Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!  
In the shadow, year out, year in,  
The silent headsman waits forever.

Wait, we say: our years are long;  
Men are weak, but Man is strong;  
Since the stars first curved their rings,  
We have looked on many things;  
Great wars come and great wars go,  
Wolf-tracks light on polar snow;  
We shall see him come and gone,  
This second-hand Napoleon.  
Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!  
Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!  
In the shadow, year out, year in,  
The silent headsman waits forever.

We saw the elder Corsican,  
And Clotho muttered as she span,  
While crowned lackeys bore the train,

Of the pinchbeck Charlemagne :  
 "Sister, stint not length of thread!  
 Sister, stay the scissors dread!  
 On Saint Helen's granite bleak,  
 Hark, the vulture whets his beak!"  
 Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!  
 Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!  
 In the shadow, year out, year in,  
 The silent headsman waits forever.

The Bonapartes, we know their bees  
 That wade in honey red to the knees;  
 Their patent reaper, its sheaves sleep sound  
 In dreamless garners underground:  
 We know false glory's spendthrift race  
 Pawning nations for feathers and lace;  
 It may be short, it may be long,  
 "Tis reckoning-day!" sneers unpaid  
 Wrong.

Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!  
 Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!  
 In the shadow, year out, year in,  
 The silent headsman waits forever.

The Cock that wears the Eagle's skin  
 Can promise what he ne'er could win;  
 Slavery reaped for fine words sown,  
 System for all, and rights for none,  
 Despots atop, a wild clan below,  
 Such is the Gaul from long ago;  
 Wash the black from the Ethiop's face,  
 Wash the past out of man or race!  
 Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!  
 Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!  
 In the shadow, year out, year in,  
 The silent headsman waits forever.

'Neath Gregory's throne a spider swings,  
 And snares the people for the kings;  
 "Luther is dead; old quarrels pass;  
 The stake's black scars are healed with  
 grass;"

So dreamers prate; did man e'er live  
 Saw priest or woman yet forgive?  
 But Luther's broom is left, and eyes  
 Peep o'er their creeds to where it lies.

Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!  
 Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!  
 In the shadow, year out, year in,  
 The silent headsman waits forever.

Smooth sails the ship of either realm,  
 Kaiser and Jesuit at the helm;  
 We look down the depths, and mark  
 Silent workers in the dark

Building slow the sharp-tusked reefs,  
 Old instincts hardening to new beliefs;  
 Patience a little; learn to wait;  
 Hours are long on the clock of Fate.  
 Spin, spin, Clotho, spin!  
 Lachesis, twist! and, Atropos, sever!  
 Darkness is strong, and so is Sin,  
 But surely God endures forever!

## THE MINER

DOWN 'mid the tangled roots of things  
 That coil about the central fire,  
 I seek for that which giveth wings  
 To stoop, not soar, to my desire.

Sometimes I hear, as 't were a sigh,  
 The sea's deep yearning far above,  
 "Thou hast the secret not," I cry,  
 "In deeper deeps is hid my Love."

They think I burrow from the sun,  
 In darkness, all alone, and weak;  
 Such loss were gain if He were won,  
 For 't is the sun's own Sun I seek.

"The earth," they murmur, "is the tomb  
 That vainly sought his life to prison;  
 Why grovel longer in the gloom?  
 He is not here; he hath arisen."

More life for me where he hath lain  
 Hidden while ye believed him dead,  
 Than in cathedrals cold and vain,  
 Built on loose sands of *It is said*.

My search is for the living gold;  
 Him I desire who dwells recluse,  
 And not his image worn and old,  
 Day-servant of our sordid use.

If him I find not, yet I find  
 The ancient joy of cell and church,  
 The glimpse, the surety undefined,  
 The unquenched ardor of the search.

Happier to chase a flying goal  
 Than to sit counting laurelled gains,  
 To guess the Soul within the soul  
 Than to be lord of what remains.

Hide still, best Good, in subtle wise,  
 Beyond my nature's utmost scope;  
 Be ever absent from mine eyes  
 To be twice present in my hope!

## GOLD EGG: A DREAM-FANTASY

HOW A STUDENT IN SEARCH OF THE  
BEAUTIFUL FELL ASLEEP IN DRESDEN  
OVER HERR PROFESSOR DOCTOR VI-  
SCHER'S WISSENSCHAFT DES SCHÖNEN,  
AND WHAT CAME THEREOF

I SWAM with undulation soft,  
Adrift on Vischer's ocean,  
And, from my cockboat up aloft,  
Sent down my mental plummet oft  
In hope to reach a notion.

But from the metaphysic sea  
No bottom was forthcoming,  
And all the while (how dearly!)  
In one eternal note of B  
My German stove kept humming.

"What's Beauty?" mused I; "is it told  
By synthesis? analysis?  
Have you not made us lead of gold?  
To feed your crucible, not sold  
Our temple's sacred chalices?"

Then o'er my senses came a change;  
My book seemed all traditions,  
Old legends of profoundest range,  
Diabery, and stories strange  
Of goblins, elves, magicians.

Old gods in modern saints I found,  
Old creeds in strange disguises;  
I thought them safely underground,  
And here they were, all safe and sound,  
Without a sign of phthisis.

Truth was, my outward eyes were closed,  
Although I did not know it;  
Deep into dream-land I had dozed,  
And thus was happily transposed  
From prosier into poet.

So what I read took flesh and blood,  
And turned to living creatures:  
The words were but the dingy bud  
That bloomed, like Adam, from the mud,  
To human forms and features.

I saw how Zeus was lodged once more  
By Baucis and Philemon;  
The text said, "Not alone of yore,  
But every day, at every door  
Knocks still the masking Demon."

DAIMON 't was printed in the book  
And, as I read it slowly,  
The letters stirred and changed, and took  
Jove's stature, the Olympian look  
Of painless melancholy.

He paused upon the threshold worn:  
"With coin I cannot pay you;  
Yet would I fain make some return;  
The gift for cheapness do not spurn,  
Accept this hen, I pray you.

"Plain feathers wears my Hemera,  
And has from ages olden;  
She makes her nest in common hay,  
And yet, of all the birds that lay,  
Her eggs alone are golden."

He turned, and could no more be seen;  
Old Baucis stared a moment,  
Then tossed poor Partlet on the green,  
And with a tone, half jest, half spleen,  
Thus made her housewife's comment:

"The stranger had a queerish face,  
His smile was hardly pleasant,  
And, though he meant it for a grace,  
Yet this old hen of barnyard race  
Was but a stingy present.

"She's quite too old for laying eggs,  
Nay, even to make a soup of;  
One only needs to see her legs, —  
You might as well boil down the pegs  
I made the brood-hen's coop of!

"Some eighteen score of such do I  
Raise every year, her sisters;  
Go, in the woods your fortunes try,  
All day for one poor earthworm pry,  
And scratch your toes to blisters!"

Philemon found the rede was good,  
And, turning on the poor hen,  
He clapt his hands, and stamped, and  
shooed,  
Hunting the exile tow'rd the wood,  
To house with snipe and moor-hen.

A poet saw and cried: "Hold! hold!  
What are you doing, madman?  
Spurn you more wealth than can be  
told,  
The fowl that lays the eggs of gold,  
Because she's plainly clad, man?"



To him Philemon: "I'll not balk  
Thy will with any shackle;  
Wilt add a burden to thy walk?  
There! take her without further talk:  
You're both but fit to cackle!"

But scarce the poet touched the bird,  
It swelled to stature regal;  
And when her cloud-wide wings she stirred,  
A whisper as of doom was heard,  
'T was Jove's bolt-bearing eagle.

As when from far-off cloud-bergs springs  
A crag, and, hurtling under,  
From cliff to cliff the rumor flings,  
So she from flight-foreboding wings  
Shook out a murmurous thunder.

She gripped the poet to her breast,  
And ever, upward soaring,  
Earth seemed a new moon in the west,  
And then one light among the rest  
Where squadrons lie at mooring.

How tell to what heaven hallowed seat  
The eagle bent his courses?  
The waves that on its bases beat,  
The gales that round it weave and fleet,  
Are life's creative forces.

Here was the bird's primeval nest,  
High on a promontory  
Star-pharosed, where she takes her rest  
To brood new æons 'neath her breast,  
The future's unfledged glory.

I know not how, but I was there  
All feeling, hearing, seeing;  
It was not wind that stirred my hair  
But living breath, the essence rare  
Of unembodied being.

And in the nest an egg of gold  
Lay soft in self-made lustre,  
Gazing whereon, what depths untold  
Within, what marvels manifold,  
Seemed silently to muster!

Daily such splendors to confront  
Is still to me and you sent?  
It glowed as when Saint Peter's front,  
Illumed, forgets its stony wont,  
And seems to throb translucent.

One saw therein the life of man,  
(Or so the poet found it,)  
The yolk and white, conceive who can,  
Were the glad earth, that, floating, span  
In the glad heaven around it.

I knew this as one knows in dream,  
Where no effects to causes  
Are chained as in our work-day scheme,  
And then was wakened by a scream  
That seemed to come from Baucis.

"Bless Zeus!" she cried, "I'm safe be-  
low!"  
First pale, then red as coral;  
And I, still drowsy, pondered slow,  
And seemed to find, but hardly know,  
Something like this for moral.

Each day the world is born anew  
For him who takes it rightly;  
Not fresher that which Adam knew,  
Not sweeter that whose moonlit dew  
Entranced Arcadia nightly.

Rightly? That's simply: 't is to see  
Some substance casts these shadows  
Which we call Life and History,  
That aimless seem to chase and flee  
Like wind-gleams over meadows.

Simply? That's nobly: 't is to know  
That God may still be met with,  
Nor groweth old, nor doth bestow  
These senses fine, this brain aglow,  
To grovel and forget with.

Beauty, Herr Doctor, trust in me,  
No chemistry will win you;  
Charis still rises from the sea:  
If you can't find her, *might* it be  
Because you seek within you?

## A FAMILIAR EPISTLE TO A FRIEND

The friend was Miss Jane Norton, sister of  
Mr. C. E. Norton.

ALIKE I hate to be your debtor,  
Or write a mere perfunctory letter;  
For letters, so it seems to me,  
Our careless quintessence should be,  
Our real nature's truant play

When Consciousness looks t' other way;  
 Not drop by drop, with watchful skill,  
 Gathered in Art's deliberate still,  
 But life's insensible completeness  
 Got as the ripe grape gets its sweetness,  
 As if it had a way to fuse  
 The golden sunlight into juice.  
 Hopeless my mental pump I try,  
 The boxes hiss, the tube is dry;  
 As those petroleum wells that spout  
 Awhile like M. C.'s, then give out,  
 My spring, once full as Arethusa,  
 Is a mere bore as dry's Creusa;  
 And yet you ask me why I'm glum,  
 And why my graver Muse is dumb.  
 Ah me! I've reasons manifold  
 Condensed in one, — I'm getting old!

When life, once past its fortieth year,  
 Wheels up its evening hemisphere,  
 The mind's own shadow, which the boy  
 Saw onward point to hope and joy,  
 Shifts round, irrevocably set  
 Tow'rd morning's loss and vain regret  
 And, argue with it as we will,  
 The clock is unconverted still.

"But count the gains," I hear you say,  
 "Which far the seeming loss outweigh;  
 Friendships built firm 'gainst flood and  
 wind

On rock-foundations of the mind;  
 Knowledge instead of scheming hope;  
 For wild adventure, settled scope;  
 Talents, from surface-ore profuse,  
 Tempered and edged to tools for use;  
 Judgment, for passion's headlong whirls;  
 Old sorrows crystallized into pearls;  
 Losses by patience turned to gains,  
 Possessions now, that once were pains;  
 Joy's blossom gone, as go it must,  
 To ripen seeds of faith and trust;  
 Why heed a snow-flake on the roof  
 If fire within keep Age aloof,  
 Though blundering north-winds push and  
 strain

With palms benumbed against the pane?"

My dear old Friend, you're very wise;  
 We always are with others' eyes,  
 And see so clear! (our neighbor's deck on)  
 What reef the idiot's sure to wreck on;  
 Folks when they learn how life has quizzed  
 'em

Are fain to make a shift with Wisdom,

And, finding she nor breaks nor bends,  
 Give her a letter to their friends.  
 Draw passion's torrent whoso will  
 Through sluices smooth to turn a mill,  
 And, taking solid toll of grist,  
 Forget the rainbow in the mist,  
 The exulting leap, the aimless haste  
 Scattered in iridescent waste;  
 Prefer who likes the sure esteem  
 To cheated youth's midsummer dream,  
 When every friend was more than Damon,  
 Each quicksand safe to build a fame on;  
 Believe that prudence snug excels  
 Youth's gross of verdant spectacles,  
 Through which earth's withered stubble  
 seen

Looks autumn-proof as painted green, —  
 I side with Moses 'gainst the masses,  
 Take you the drudge, give me the glasses!  
 And, for your talents shaped with practice,  
 Convince me first that such the fact is;  
 Let whoso likes be beat, poor fool,  
 On life's hard stithy to a tool,  
 Be whoso will a ploughshare made,  
 Let me remain a jolly blade!

What's Knowledge, with her stocks and  
 lands,

To gay Conjecture's yellow strands?  
 What's watching her slow flock's increase  
 To ventures for the golden fleece?  
 What her deep ships, safe under lee,  
 To youth's light craft, that drinks the sea,  
 For Flying Islands making sail,  
 And failing where 't is gain to fail?  
 Ah me! Experience (so we're told),  
 Time's crucible, turns lead to gold;  
 Yet what's experience won but dross,  
 Cloud-gold transmuted to our loss?  
 What but base coin the best event  
 To the untried experiment?

'T was an old couple, says the poet,  
 That lodged the gods and did not know it;  
 Youth sees and knows them as they were  
 Before Olympus' top was bare;  
 From Swampscot's flats his eye divine  
 Sees Venus rocking on the brine,  
 With lucent limbs, that somehow scatter a  
 Charm that turns Doll to Cleopatra;  
 Bacchus (that now is scarce induced  
 To give Eld's lagging blood a boost),  
 With cymbals' clang and pards to draw  
 him,

Divine as Ariadne saw him,

Storms through Youth's pulse with all his train

And wins new Indies in his brain;  
 Apollo (with the old a trope,  
 A sort of finer Mister Pope),  
 Apollo — but the Muse forbids:  
 At his approach cast down thy lids,  
 And think it joy enough to hear  
 Far off his arrows singing clear;  
 He knows enough who silent knows  
 The quiver chiming as he goes;  
 He tells too much who e'er betrays  
 The shining Archer's secret ways.

Dear Friend, you 're right and I am wrong;

My quibbles are not worth a song,  
 And I sophistically tease  
 My fancy sad to tricks like these.  
 I could not cheat you if I would;  
 You know me and my jesting mood,  
 Mere surface-foam, for pride concealing  
 The purpose of my deeper feeling.  
 I have not spilt one drop of joy  
 Poured in the senses of the boy,  
 Nor Nature fails my walks to bless  
 With all her golden inwardness;  
 And as blind nestlings, unafraid,  
 Stretch up wide-mouthed to every shade  
 By which their downy dream is stirred,  
 Taking it for the mother-bird,  
 So, when God's shadow, which is light,  
 Unheralded, by day or night,  
 My wakening instincts falls across,  
 Silent as sunbeams over moss,  
 In my heart's nest half-conscious things  
 Stir with a helpless sense of wings,  
 Lift themselves up, and tremble long  
 With premonitions sweet of song.

Be patient, and perhaps (who knows?)  
 These may be winged one day like those;  
 If thrushes, close-embowered to sing,  
 Pierced through with June's delicious sting;  
 If swallows, their half-hour to run  
 Star-breasted in the setting sun.  
 At first they 're but the unfledged proem,  
 Or songless schedule of a poem;  
 When from the shell they 're hardly dry  
 If some folks thrust them forth, must I?

But let me end with a comparison  
 Never yet hit upon by e'er a son  
 Of our American Apollo,

(And there 's where I shall beat them hollow,

If he indeed 's no courtly St. John,  
 But, as West said, a Mohawk Injun.)  
 A poem 's like a cruise for whales:  
 Through untried seas the hunter sails,  
 His prow dividing waters known  
 To the blue iceberg's hulk alone;  
 At last, on farthest edge of day,  
 He marks the smoky puff of spray;  
 Then with bent oars the shallow flies  
 To where the basking quarry lies;  
 Then the excitement of the strife,  
 The crimsoned waves, — ah, this is life!

But, the dead plunder once secured  
 And safe beside the vessel moored,  
 All that had stirred the blood before  
 Is so much blubber, nothing more,  
 (I mean no pun, nor image so  
 Mere sentimental verse, you know,)  
 And all is tedium, smoke, and soil,  
 In trying out the noisome oil.

Yes, this *is* life! And so the bard  
 Through briny deserts, never scarred  
 Since Noah's keel, a subject seeks,  
 And lies upon the watch for weeks;  
 That once harpooned and helpless lying,  
 What follows is but weary trying.

Now I 've a notion, if a poet  
 Beat up for themes, his verse will show it;  
 I wait for subjects that hunt me,  
 By day or night won't let me be,  
 And hang about me like a curse,  
 Till they have made me into verse,  
 From line to line my fingers tease  
 Beyond my knowledge, as the bees  
 Build no new cell till those before  
 With limpid summer-sweet run o'er;  
 Then, if I neither sing nor shine,  
 Is it the subject's fault, or mine?

#### AN EMBER PICTURE

How strange are the freaks of memory!  
 The lessons of life we forget,  
 While a trifle, a trick of color,  
 In the wonderful web is set, —

Set by some mordant of fancy,  
 And, spite of the wear and tear

Of time or distance or trouble,  
Insists on its right to be there.

A chance had brought us together;  
Our talk was of matters-of-course;  
We were nothing, one to the other,  
But a short half-hour's resource.

We spoke of French acting and actors,  
And their easy, natural way:  
Of the weather, for it was raining  
As we drove home from the play.

We debated the social nothings  
We bore ourselves so to discuss;  
The thunderous rumors of battle  
Were silent the while for us.

Arrived at her door, we left her  
With a drippingly hurried adieu,  
And our wheels went crunching the gravel  
Of the oak-darkened avenue.

As we drove away through the shadow,  
The candle she held in the door  
From rain-varnished tree-trunk to tree-  
trunk  
Flashed fainter, and flashed no more;—

Flashed fainter, then wholly faded  
Before we had passed the wood;  
But the light of the face behind it  
Went with me and stayed for good.

The vision of scarce a moment,  
And hardly marked at the time,  
It comes unbidden to haunt me,  
Like a scrap of ballad-rhyme.

Had she beauty? Well, not what they call  
so;  
You may find a thousand as fair;  
And yet there 's her face in my memory  
With no special claim to be there.

As I sit sometimes in the twilight,  
And call back to life in the coals  
Old faces and hopes and fancies  
Long buried, (good rest to their souls!)

Her face shines out in the embers;  
I see her holding the light,  
And hear the crunch of the gravel  
And the sweep of the rain that night.

'T is a face that can never grow older,  
That never can part with its gleam,  
'T is a gracious possession forever,  
For is it not all a dream?

TO H. W. L.

ON HIS BIRTHDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 1867

"ELMWOOD, February 27, 1867.

"MY DEAR LONGFELLOW,— On looking back, I find that our personal intercourse is now of nearly thirty years' date. It began on your part in a note acknowledging my *Class Poem* much more kindly than it deserved. Since then it has ripened into friendship, and there has never been a jar between us. If there had been, it would certainly have been my fault and not yours. Friendship is called the wine of life, and there certainly is a stimulus in it that warms and inspires as we grow older. Ours should have some body to have kept so long.

"I planned you a little surprise in the *Advertiser* for your birthday breakfast. I hope my nosegay did not spoil the flavor of your coffee. It is a hard thing to make one that will wholly please, for some flowers will not bear to be handled without wilting, and the kind I have tried to make a pretty bunch of is of that variety. But let me hope the best from your kindness, if not from their color or perfume.

"In case they should please you (and because there was one misprint in the *Advertiser*, and two phrases which I have now made more to my mind), I have copied them that you might have them in my own handwriting. In print, you see, I have omitted the tell-tale ciphers—not that there was anything to regret in them, for we have a proverbial phrase 'like sixty' which implies not only unabated but extraordinary vigor.

"Wishing you as many happy returns as a wise man should desire, I remain always affectionately yours, J. R. L." *Letters* I. 378, 379.

I NEED not praise the sweetness of his song,  
Where limpid verse to limpid verse  
succeeds  
Smooth as our Charles, when, fearing lest  
he wrong  
The new moon's mirrored skiff, he slides  
along,  
Full without noise, and whispers in his  
reeds.



With loving breath of all the winds his  
name

Is blown about the world, but to his  
friends

A sweeter secret hides behind his fame,  
And Love steals shyly through the loud  
acclaim

To murmur a *God bless you!* and there  
ends.

As I muse backward up the checkered  
years

Wherein so much was given, so much  
was lost,

Blessings in both kinds, such as cheapen  
tears, —

But hush! this is not for profaner ears;

Let them drink molten pearls nor dream  
the cost.

Some suck up poison from a sorrow's core,  
As naught but nightshade grew upon  
earth's ground;

Love turned all his to heart's-ease, and the  
more

Fate tried his bastions, she but forced a  
door

Leading to sweeter manhood and more  
sound.

Even as a wind-waved fountain's swaying  
shade

Seems of mixed race, a gray wraith shot  
with sun,

So through his trial faith translucent rayed  
Till darkness, half disnatured so, betrayed  
A heart of sunshine that would fain  
o'errun.

Surely if skill in song the shears may stay  
And of its purpose cheat the charmed  
abyss,

If our poor life be lengthened by a lay,  
He shall not go, although his presence  
may,

And the next age in praise shall double  
this.

Long days be his, and each as lusty-sweet  
As gracious natures find his song to be;  
May Age steal on with softly-cadenced feet  
Falling in music, as for him were meet

Whose choicest verse is harsher-toned  
than he!

## THE NIGHTINGALE IN THE STUDY

"While I was most unwell," Lowell wrote to a friend, September 21, 1875, "I could not find any reading that would seclude me from myself till one day I bethought me of Calderon. I took down a volume of his plays, and in half an hour was completely absorbed. He is surely one of the most marvellous of poets. I have recorded my debt to him in a poem, *The Nightingale in the Study*."

"COME forth!" my catbird calls to me,

"And hear me sing a cavatina  
That, in this old familiar tree,  
Shall hang a garden of Alcina.

"These buttercups shall brim with wine  
Beyond all Lesbian juice or Massie;  
May not New England be divine?  
My ode to ripening summer classic?

"Or, if to me you will not hark,  
By Beaver Brook a thrush is ringing  
Till all the alder-coverts dark  
Seem sunshine-dappled with his sing-  
ing.

"Come out beneath the unmastered sky,  
With its emancipating spaces,  
And learn to sing as well as I,  
Without premeditated graces.

"What boot your many-volumed gains,  
Those withered leaves forever turning,  
To win, at best, for all your pains,  
A nature mummy-wrapt in learning?

"The leaves wherein true wisdom lies  
On living trees the sun are drinking;  
Those white clouds, drowsing through the  
skies,  
Grew not so beautiful by thinking.

"Come out!" with me the oriole cries,  
Escape the demon that pursues you!  
And, hark, the cuckoo weatherwise,  
Still hiding farther onward, woos you."

"Alas, dear friend, that, all my days,  
Hast poured from that syringa thicket  
The quaintly discontinuous lays  
To which I hold a season-ticket,

"A season-ticket cheaply bought  
With a dessert of pilfered berries,  
And who so oft my soul hast caught  
With morn and evening voluntaries,

"Deem me not faithless, if all day  
Among my dusty books I linger,  
No pipe, like thee, for June to play  
With fancy-led, half-conscious finger.

"A bird is singing in my brain  
And bubbling o'er with mingled fan-  
cies,  
Gay, tragic, rapt, right heart of Spain  
Fed with the sap of old romances.

"I ask no ampler skies than those  
His magic music rears above me,  
No falser friends, no truer foes, —  
And does not Doña Clara love me ?

"Cloaked shapes, a twanging of guitars,  
A rush of feet, and rapiers clashing,  
Then silence deep with breathless stars,  
And overhead a white hand flashing.

"O music of all moods and climes,  
Vengeful, forgiving, sensuous, saintly,  
Where still, between the Christian chimes,  
The Moorish cymbal tinkles faintly !

"O life borne lightly in the hand,  
For friend or foe with grace Castil-  
ian !

O valley safe in Fancy's land,  
Not tramped to mud yet by the mil-  
lion !

"Bird of to-day, thy songs are stale  
To his, my singer of all weathers,  
My Calderon, my nightingale,  
My Arab soul in Spanish feathers.

"Ah, friend, these singers dead so long,  
And still, God knows, in purgatory,  
Give its best sweetness to all song,  
To Nature's self her better glory."

#### IN THE TWILIGHT

MEN say the sullen instrument,  
That, from the Master's bow,  
With pangs of joy or woe,

Feels music's soul through every fibre sent,  
Whispers the ravished strings  
More than he knew or meant ;  
Old summers in its memory glow ;  
The secrets of the wind it sings ;  
It hears the April-loosened springs ;  
And mixes with its mood  
All it dreamed when it stood  
In the murmurous pine-wood  
Long ago !

The magical moonlight then  
Steeped every bough and cone ;  
The roar of the brook in the glen  
Came dim from the distance blown ;  
The wind through its glooms sang low,  
And it swayed to and fro  
With delight as it stood,  
In the wonderful wood,  
Long ago !

O my life, have we not had seasons  
That only said, Live and rejoice ?  
That asked not for causes and reasons,  
But made us all feeling and voice ?  
When we went with the winds in their  
blowing,  
When Nature and we were peers,  
And we seemed to share in the flowing  
Of the inexhaustible years ?  
Have we not from the earth drawn juices  
Too fine for earth's sordid uses ?  
Have I heard, have I seen  
All I feel, all I know ?  
Doth my heart overween ?  
Or could it have been  
Long ago ?

Sometimes a breath floats by me,  
An odor from Dreamland sent,  
That makes the ghost seem nigh me  
Of a splendor that came and went,  
Of a life lived somewhere, I know not  
In what diviner sphere,  
Of memories that stay not and go not,  
Like music heard once by an ear  
That cannot forget or reclaim it,  
A something so shy, it would shame it  
To make it a show,  
A something too vague, could I name it,  
For others to know,  
As if I had lived it or dreamed it,  
As if I had acted or schemed it,  
Long ago !

And yet, could I live it over,  
 This life that stirs in my brain,  
 Could I be both maiden and lover,  
 Moon and tide, bee and clover,  
 As I seem to have been, once again,  
 Could I but speak it and show it,  
 This pleasure more sharp than pain,  
 That baffles and lures me so,  
 The world should once more have a poet,  
 Such as it had  
 In the ages glad,  
 Long ago!

## THE FOOT-PATH

It mounts athwart the windy hill  
 Through fallow slopes of upland bare,  
 And Fancy climbs with foot-fall still  
 Its narrowing curves that end in air.

By day, a warmer-hearted blue  
 Stoops softly to that topmost swell;  
 Its thread-like windings seem a clue  
 To gracious climes where all is well.

By night, far yonder, I surmise  
 An ampler world than clips my ken,  
 Where the great stars of happier skies  
 Commingle nobler fates of men.

I look and long, then haste me home,  
 Still master of my secret rare;  
 Once tried, the path would end in Rome,  
 But now it leads me everywhere.

Forever to the new it guides,  
 From former good, old overmuch;  
 What Nature for her poets hides,  
 'Tis wiser to divine than clutch.

The bird I list hath never come  
 Within the scope of mortal ear;  
 My prying step would make him dumb,  
 And the fair tree, his shelter, sear.

Behind the hill, behind the sky,  
 Behind my inmost thought, he sings;

No feet avail; to hear it nigh,  
 The song itself must lend the wings.

Sing on, sweet bird close hid, and raise  
 Those angel stairways in my brain,  
 That climb from these low-vaulted days  
 To spacious sunshines far from pain.

Sing when thou wilt, enchantment fleet,  
 I leave thy covert haunt untrod,  
 And envy Science not her feat  
 To make a twice-told tale of God.

They said the fairies tript no more,  
 And long ago that Pan was dead;  
 'T was but that fools preferred to bore  
 Earth's rind inch-deep for truth instead.

Pan leaps and pipes all summer long,  
 The fairies dance each full-mooned night,  
 Would we but doff our lenses strong,  
 And trust our wiser eyes' delight.

City of Elf-land, just without  
 Our seeing, marvel ever new,  
 Glimpsed in fair weather, a sweet doubt  
 Sketched-in, mirage-like, on the blue,

I build thee in yon sunset cloud,  
 Whose edge allures to climb the height;  
 I hear thy drowned bells, inly-loud,  
 From still pools dusk with dreams of  
 night.

Thy gates are shut to hardest will,  
 Thy countersign of long-lost speech,—  
 Those fountained courts, those chambers  
 still,  
 Fronting Time's far East, who shall reach?

I know not, and will never pry,  
 But trust our human heart for all;  
 Wonders that from the seeker fly  
 Into an open sense may fall.

Hide in thine own soul, and surprise  
 The password of the unwary elves;  
 Seek it, thou canst not bribe their spies;  
 Unsought, they whisper it themselves.

## POEMS OF THE WAR

## THE WASHERS OF THE SHROUD

OCTOBER, 1861

Lowell wrote at some length to C. E. Norton concerning the production of this poem.

ELMWOOD, Oct. 12, 1861.

. . . You urged me to read poetry — to feed myself on bee bread — so that I might get into the mood of writing some. Well, I have n't been reading any, but I *have* written something — whether poetry or no I cannot tell yet. But I want you to like it if you can. Leigh Hunt speaks somewhere of our writing things for particular people, and wondering as we write if such or such a one will like it. Just so I thought of you, *after* I had written — for while I was writing I was wholly absorbed. I had just two days allowed me by Fields for the November *Atlantic*, and I got it done. It had been in my head some time, and when you see it you will remember my having spoken to you about it. Indeed, I owe it to you, for the hint came from one of those books of Souvestre's you lent me — the Breton legends. The writing took hold of me enough to leave me tired out and to satisfy me entirely as to what was the original of my head and back pains. But whether it is good or not, I am not yet far enough off to say. But *do* like it, if you can. Fields says it is "splendid," with tears in his eyes — but then I read it to him, which is half the battle. I began it as a lyric, but it *would* be too aphoristic for that, and finally flatly refused to sing at any price. So I submitted, took to pentameters, and only hope the thoughts are good enough to be preserved in the ice of the colder and almost glacier-slow measure. I think I have done well — in some stanzas at least — and not wasted words. It is about present matters — but abstract enough to be above the newspapers. . . .

ALONG a river-side, I know not where,  
I walked one night in mystery of dream;  
A chill creeps curdling yet beneath my  
hair,  
To think what chanced me by the pallid  
gleam  
Of a moon-wraith that waned through  
haunted air.

Pale fireflies pulsed within the meadow-  
mist  
Their halos, wavering thistle downs of  
light;  
The loon, that seemed to mock some goblin  
tryst,  
Laughed; and the echoes, huddling in af-  
fright,  
Like Odin's hounds, fled baying down the  
night.

Then all was silent, till there smote my  
ear  
A movement in the stream that checked  
my breath:  
Was it the slow splash of a wading deer?  
But something said, "This water is of  
Death!  
The Sisters wash a shroud, — ill thing to  
hear!"

I, looking then, beheld the ancient Three  
Known to the Greek's and to the North-  
man's creed,  
That sit in shadow of the mystic Tree,  
Still crooning, as they weave their endless  
brede,  
One song: "Time was, Time is, and Time  
shall be."

No wrinkled crones were they, as I had  
deemed,  
But fair as yesterday, to-day, to-morrow,  
To mourner, lover, poet, ever seemed;  
Something too high for joy, too deep for  
sorrow,  
Thrilled in their tones, and from their  
faces gleamed.

"Still men and nations reap as they have  
strawn,"  
So sang they, working at their task the  
while;  
"The fatal raiment must be cleansed ere  
dawn:  
For Austria? Italy? the Sea-Queen's  
isle?  
O'er what quenched grandeur must our  
shroud be drawn?"



"Or is it for a younger, fairer corse,  
That gathered States like children round  
his knees,  
That tamed the wave to be his posting-  
horse,  
Feller of forests, linker of the seas,  
Bridge-builder, hammerer, youngest son of  
Thor's ?

"What make we, murmur'st thou ? and  
what are we ?  
When empires must be wound, we bring  
the shroud,  
The time-old web of the implacable Three:  
Is it too coarse for him, the young and  
proud ?  
Earth's mightiest deigned to wear it, —  
why not he ? "

"Is there no hope ? " I moaned, "so strong,  
so fair!  
Our Fowl whose proud bird would brook  
erewhile  
No rival's swoop in all our western air!  
Gather the ravens, then, in funeral file  
For him, life's morn yet golden in his hair?

"Leave me not hopeless, ye unpitying  
dames!  
I see, half seeing. Tell me, ye who scanned  
The stars, Earth's elders, still must noblest  
aims  
Be traced upon oblivious ocean-sands?  
Must Hesper join the wailing ghosts of  
names ? "

"When grass-blades stiffen with red battle-  
dew,  
Ye deem we choose the victor and the slain:  
Say, choose we them that shall be leal and  
true  
To the heart's longing, the high faith of  
brain?  
Yet there the victory lies, if ye but knew.

"Three roots bear up Dominion: Know-  
ledge, Will, —  
These twain are strong, but stronger yet  
the third, —  
Obedience, — 't is the great tap-root that  
still,  
Knit round the rock of Duty, is not stirred,  
Though Heaven - loosed tempests spend  
their utmost skill.

"Is the doom sealed for Hesper? 'T is not  
we  
Denounce it, but the Law before all time:  
The brave makes danger opportunity;  
The waverer, paltering with the chance sub-  
lime,  
Dwarfs it to peril: which shall Hesper be?

"Hath he let vultures climb his eagle's  
seat  
To make Jove's bolts purveyors of their  
maw ?  
Hath he the Many's plaudits found more  
sweet  
Than Wisdom ? held Opinion's wind for  
Law ?  
Then let him hearken for the doomster's  
feet!

"Rough are the steps, slow-hewn in flint-  
iest rock,  
States climb to power by; slippery those  
with gold  
Down which they stumble to eternal mock:  
No chafferer's hand shall long the sceptre  
hold,  
Who, given a Fate to shape, would sell the  
block.

"We sing old Sagas, songs of weal and woe,  
Mystic because too cheaply understood;  
Dark sayings are not ours; men hear and  
know,  
See Evil weak, see strength alone in Good,  
Yet hope to stem God's fire with walls of  
tow.

"Time Was unlocks the riddle of Time Is,  
That offers choice of glory or of gloom;  
The solver makes Time Shall Be surely  
his.  
But hasten, Sisters! for even now the tomb  
Grates its slow hinge and calls from the  
abyss."

"But not for him," I cried, "not yet for  
him,  
Whose large horizon, westering, star by  
star  
Wins from the void to where on Ocean's  
rim  
The sunset shuts the world with golden bar,  
Not yet his thews shall fail, his eye grow  
dim!

"His shall be larger manhood, saved for those  
That walk unblenching through the trial-fires ;  
Not suffering, but faint heart, is worst of woes,  
And he no base-born son of craven sires,  
Whose eye need blench confronted with his foes.

"Tears may be ours, but proud, for those who win  
Death's royal purple in the foeman's lines;  
Peace, too, brings tears ; and mid the battle-din,  
The wiser ear some text of God divines,  
For the sheathed blade may rust with darker sin.

"God, give us peace! not such as lulls to sleep,  
But sword on thigh, and brow with purpose knit!  
And let our Ship of State to harbor sweep,  
Her ports all up, her battle-lanterns lit,  
And her leashed thunders gathering for their leap!"

So cried I with clenched hands and passionate pain,  
Thinking of dear ones by Potomac's side;  
Again the loon laughed mocking, and again  
The echoes bayed far down the night and died,  
While waking I recalled my wandering brain.

## TWO SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF BLONDEL

AUTUMN, 1863

### SCENE I. — *Near a castle in Germany.*

'TWERE no hard task, perchance, to win  
The popular laurel for my song ;  
'T were only to comply with sin,  
And own the crown, though snatched by wrong:  
Rather Truth's chaplet let me wear,  
Though sharp as death its thorns may sting;  
Loyal to Loyalty, I bear  
No badge but of my rightful king.

Patient by town and tower I wait,  
Or o'er the blustering moorland go;  
I buy no praise at cheaper rate,  
Or what faint hearts may fancy so;  
For me, no joy in lady's bower,  
Or hall, or tourney, will I sing,  
Till the slow stars wheel round the hour  
That crowns my hero and my king.

While all the land runs red with strife,  
And wealth is won by pedler-crimes,  
Let who will find content in life  
And tinkle in unmanly rhymes;  
I wait and seek ; through dark and light,  
Safe in my heart my hope I bring,  
Till I once more my faith may plight  
To him my whole soul owns her king.

When power is filched by drone and dolt,  
And, with caught breath and flashing eye,  
Her knuckles whitening round the bolt,  
Vengeance leans eager from the sky,  
While this and that the people guess,  
And to the skirts of praters cling,  
Who court the crowd they should compress,  
I turn in scorn to seek my king.

Shut in what tower of darkling chance  
Or dungeon of a narrow doom,  
Dream'st thou of battle-axe and lance  
That for the Cross make crashing room ?  
Come! with hushed breath the battle waits  
In the wild van thy mace's swing;  
While doubters parley with their fates,  
Make thou thine own and ours, my king!

O strong to keep upright the old,  
And wise to buttress with the new,  
Prudent, as only are the bold,  
Clear-eyed, as only are the true,  
To foes benign, to friendship stern,  
Intent to imp Law's broken wing,  
Who would not die, if death might earn  
The right to kiss thy hand, my king ?

### SCENE II. — *An Inn near the Château of Chalus.*

Well, the whole thing is over, and here I sit  
With one arm in a sling and a milk-score  
of gashes,  
And this flagon of Cyprus must e'en warm  
my wit,  
Since what's left of youth's flame is a  
head flecked with ashes.

I remember I sat in this very same inn, —  
 I was young then, and one young man  
 thought I was handsome, —  
 I had found out what prison King Richard  
 was in,  
 And was spurring for England to push on  
 the ransom.

How I scorned the dull souls that sat guz-  
 zling around  
 And knew not my secret nor recked my  
 derision!  
 Let the world sink or swim, John or Richard  
 be crowned,  
 All one, so the beer-tax got lenient revi-  
 sion.  
 How little I dreamed, as I tramped up and  
 down,  
 That granting our wish one of Fate's  
 saddest jokes is!  
 I had mine with a vengeance, — my king  
 got his crown,  
 And made his whole business to break  
 other folks's.

I might as well join in the safe old *tum*,  
*tum* :

A hero's an excellent loadstar, — but,  
 bless ye,  
 What infinite odds 'twixt a hero to come  
 And your only too palpable hero *in esse*!  
 Precisely the odds (such examples are rife)  
 'Twixt the poem conceived and the rhyme  
 we make show of,  
 'Twixt the boy's morning dream and the  
 wake-up of life,  
 'Twixt the Blondel God meant and a  
 Blondel I know of!

But the world's better off, I'm convinced  
 of it now,  
 Than if heroes, like buns, could be bought  
 for a penny  
 To regard all mankind as their haltered  
 milch-cow,  
 And just care for themselves. Well,  
 God cares for the many;  
 For somehow the poor old Earth blunders  
 along,  
 Each son of hers adding his mite of un-  
 fitness,  
 And, choosing the sure way of coming out  
 wrong,  
 Gets to port as the next generation will  
 witness.

You think her old ribs have come all crash-  
 ing through,  
 If a whisk of Fate's broom snap your  
 cobweb asunder;  
 But her rivets were clinched by a wiser  
 than you,  
 And our sins cannot push the Lord's right  
 hand from under.  
 Better one honest man who can wait for  
 God's mind  
 In our poor shifting scene here though  
 heroes were plenty!  
 Better one bite, at forty, of Truth's bitter  
 rind,  
 Than the hot wine that gushed from the  
 vintage of twenty!

I see it all now: when I wanted a king,  
 'T was the kingship that failed in myself  
 I was seeking, —  
 'T is so much less easy to do than to sing,  
 So much simpler to reign by a proxy  
 than *be* king!  
 Yes, I think I *do* see: after all's said and  
 sung,  
 Take this one rule of life and you never  
 will rue it, —  
 'T is but do your own duty and hold your  
 own tongue  
 And Blondel were royal himself, if he  
 knew it!

## MEMORIÆ POSITUM

R. G. SHAW

In a letter to Colonel Shaw's mother, written  
 August 28, 1863, Lowell says: "I have been  
 writing something about Robert; and if, after  
 keeping a little while, it should turn out to be  
 a poem I shall print it, but not unless I think  
 it some way worthy of what I feel, however,  
 for the best verse falls short of noble living  
 and dying such as his. I would rather have  
 my name known and blest, as his will be,  
 through all the hovels of an outcast race, than  
 blaring from all the trumpets of repute." He  
 kept the poem three months and then wrote  
 to Mr. Fields, — "You know I *owe* you a  
 poem — *two* in my reckoning, and here is one  
 of them. If this is not to your mind, I can  
 hammer you out another. I have a feeling  
 that some of it is *good* — but is it too long? I  
 want to fling my leaf on dear Shaw's grave.  
 Perhaps I was wrong in stiffening the feet of  
 my verses a little, in order to give them a kind

of slow funeral tread. But I conceived it so, and so it would be. I wanted the poem a little *monumental*, perhaps I have made it *obituary*. But tell me just how it strikes you, and don't be afraid of my nerves. They can stand much in the way of friendly frankness, and besides, I find I am acquiring a vice of modesty as I grow older."

In another letter, when speaking of the distinction between odes for the closet and odes for recitation, he says: "I chose my measures with my ears open. So I did in writing the poem on Rob Shaw. That is regular because meant only to be read, and because also I thought it should have in the form of its stanza something of the formality of an epitaph."

When, in the last stanza, Lowell wrote

"I write of one,  
While with dim eyes I think of three,"

the reader recalls that moving passage in No. X. of the second series of *Biglow Papers*, where Mr. Hosea Biglow in his homely speech bursts forth:—

"Why, hain't I held 'em on my knee?  
Did n't I love to see 'em growin',  
Three likely lads ez wal could be,"—

and one knows of whom Lowell was thinking.

## I

BENEATH the trees,  
My lifelong friends in this dear spot,  
Sad now for eyes that see them not,  
I hear the autumnal breeze  
Wake the dry leaves to sigh for gladness gone,  
Whispering vague omens of oblivion,  
Hear, restless as the seas,  
Time's grim feet rustling through the withered grace  
Of many a spreading realm and strong-stemmed race,  
Even as my own through these.

Why make we moan  
For loss that doth enrich us yet  
With upward yearnings of regret?  
Bleaker than unmosed stone  
Our lives were but for this immortal gain  
Of unstilled longing and inspiring pain!  
As thrills of long-hushed tone  
Live in the viol, so our souls grow fine  
With keen vibrations from the touch divine  
Of noble natures gone.

'T were indiscreet  
To vex the shy and sacred grief  
With harsh obtrusions of relief;

Yet, Verse, with noiseless feet,  
Go whisper: "*This death hath far choicer ends*

Than slowly to impearl in hearts of friends;  
These obsequies 't is meet  
Not to seclude in closets of the heart,  
But, church-like, with wide doorways, to impart  
Even to the heedless street."

## II

Brave, good, and true,  
I see him stand before me now,  
And read again on that young brow,  
Where every hope was new,  
*How sweet were life!* Yet, by the mouth  
firm-set,  
And look made up for Duty's utmost debt,  
I could divine he knew  
That death within the sulphurous hostile lines,  
In the mere wreck of nobly-pitched designs,  
Plucks heart's-ease, and not rue.

Happy their end  
Who vanish down life's evening stream  
Placid as swans that drift in dream  
Round the next river-bend!  
Happy long life, with honor at the close,  
Friends' painless tears, the softened thought  
of foes!  
And yet, like him, to spend  
All at a gush, keeping our first faith sure  
From mid-life's doubt and eld's contentment poor,  
What more could Fortune send?

Right in the van,  
On the red rampart's slippery swell,  
With heart that beat a charge, he fell  
Foeward, as fits a man;  
But the high soul burns on to light men's feet  
Where death for noble ends makes dying sweet;  
His life her crescent's span  
Orbs full with share in their undarkening days  
Who ever climbed the battailous steeps of praise  
Since valor's praise began.

## III

His life's expense  
Hath won him coeternal youth



With the immaculate prime of Truth ;  
 While we, who make pretence  
 At living on, and wake and eat and sleep,  
 And life's stale trick by repetition keep,  
 Our fickle permanence  
 (A poor leaf-shadow on a brook, whose play  
 Of busy idlesse ceases with our day)  
 Is the mere cheat of sense.

We bide our chance,  
 Unhappy, and make terms with Fate  
 A little more to let us wait ;  
 He leads for aye the advance,  
 Hope's forlorn-hopes that plant the desperate good  
 For nobler Earths and days of manlier mood ;  
 Our wall of circumstance  
 Cleared at a bound, he flashes o'er the fight,  
 A saintly shape of fame, to cheer the right  
 And steel each wavering glance.

I write of one,  
 While with dim eyes I think of three ;  
 Who weeps not others fair and brave as he ?  
 Ah, when the fight is won,  
 Dear Land, whom triflers now make bold to scorn,  
 (Thee ! from whose forehead Earth awaits her morn,)  
 How nobler shall the sun  
 Flame in thy sky, how braver breathe thy air,  
 That thou bred'st children who for thee could dare  
 And die as thine have done !

## ON BOARD THE '76

WRITTEN FOR MR. BRYANT'S SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY

NOVEMBER 3, 1864

In a letter written a score of years before, Lowell characterizes this poem as "a kind of palinode to what I said of him in the *Fable for Critics*, which has something of youth's infallibility in it, or at any rate of youth's irresponsibility."

OUR ship lay tumbling in an angry sea,  
 Her rudder gone, her mainmast o'er the side ;  
 Her scuppers, from the waves' clutch staggering free,  
 Trailed threads of priceless crimson through the tide ;  
 Sails, shrouds, and spars with pirate cannon torn,  
 We lay, awaiting morn.

Awaiting morn, such morn as mocks despair ;  
 And she that bare the promise of the world  
 Within her sides, now hopeless, helmless, bare,  
 At random o'er the wildering waters hurled ;  
 The reek of battle drifting slow alee  
 Not sullener than we.

Morn came at last to peer into our woe,  
 When lo, a sail ! Now surely help was nigh ;  
 The red cross flames aloft, Christ's pledge ;  
 but no,  
 Her black guns grinning hate, she rushes by  
 And hails us : — "Gains the leak ! Ay, so we thought !  
 Sink, then, with curses fraught !"

I leaned against my gun still angry-hot,  
 And my lids tingled with the tears held back :  
 This scorn methought was crueller than shot:  
 The manly death-grip in the battle-wrack,  
 Yard-arm to yard-arm, were more friendly far  
 Than such fear-smothered war.

There our foe wallowed, like a wounded brute  
 The fiercer for his hurt. What now were best ?  
 Once more tug bravely at the peril's root,  
 Though death came with it ? Or evade the test  
 If right or wrong in this God's world of ours  
 Be leagued with mightier powers ?

Some, faintly loyal, felt their pulses lag  
 With the slow beat that doubts and then  
 despairs;  
 Some, caitiff, would have struck the starry  
 flag  
 That knits us with our past, and makes  
 us heirs  
 Of deeds high-hearted as were ever done  
 'Neath the all-seeing sun.

But there was one, the Singer of our crew,  
 Upon whose head Age waved his peace-  
 ful sign,  
 But whose red heart's-blood no surrender  
 knew;  
 And couchant under brows of massive  
 line,  
 The eyes, like guns beneath a parapet,  
 Watched, charged with lightnings yet.

The voices of the hills did his obey;  
 The torrents flashed and tumbled in his  
 song;  
 He brought our native fields from far  
 away,  
 Or set us 'mid the innumerable throng  
 Of dateless woods, or where we heard the  
 calm  
 Old homestead's evening psalm.

But now he sang of faith to things unseen,  
 Of freedom's birthright given to us in  
 trust;  
 And words of doughty cheer he spoke be-  
 tween,  
 That made all earthly fortune seem as  
 dust,  
 Matched with that duty, old as Time and  
 new,  
 Of being brave and true.

We, listening, learned what makes the  
 might of words, —  
 Manhood to back them, constant as a  
 star;  
 His voice rammed home our cannon, edged  
 our swords,  
 And sent our boarders shouting; shroud  
 and spar  
 Heard him and stiffened; the sails heard,  
 and wooed  
 The winds with loftier mood.

In our dark hours he manned our guns  
 again;

Remanned ourselves from his own man-  
 hood's stores;  
 Pride, honor, country, throbbed through  
 all his strain;  
 And shall we praise? God's praise was  
 his before;  
 And on our futile laurels he looks down,  
 Himself our bravest crown.

## ODE RECITED AT THE HAR- VARD COMMEMORATION

JULY 21, 1865

Of none of his poems did Lowell himself  
 write more critically, and into none, perhaps,  
 did he pour so much fervor in the composition.  
 In a playful letter to Miss Norton, written in  
 somewhat of a reaction four days after the de-  
 livery of the poem, he wrote: "Was I not so  
 rapt with the fervor of conception as I have  
 not been these ten years, losing my sleep, my  
 appetite and my flesh, those attributes to which  
 I before alluded as nobly uniting us in a com-  
 mon nature with our kind? Did I not for two  
 days exasperate everybody that came near me  
 by reciting passages in order to try them on?  
 Did I not even fall backward and downward to  
 the old folly of hopeful youth, and think I had  
 written something *really* good at last? And  
 am I not now enduring those retributive dumps  
 which ever follow such sinful exultations, the  
 Erynnies of Vanity? . . . Like a boy, I mis-  
 took my excitement for inspiration, and here I  
 am in the mud. You see I am a little disap-  
 pointed and a little few (*un petit peu*) vexed.  
 I did not make the hit I expected, and am  
 ashamed at having been again tempted into  
 thinking I could write *poetry*, a delusion from  
 which I have been tolerably free these dozen  
 years." The next day in a postscript he added:  
 "I have not got cool yet (I mean as to nerves),  
 and lie awake at night thinking how much  
 better my verses might have been, only I can't  
 make 'em so." Twenty years later in recall-  
 ing the circumstances of composition he wrote  
 to Mr. Gilder: "The passage about Lincoln  
 was not in the ode as originally recited, but  
 added immediately after. . . . The ode itself  
 was an improvisation. Two days before the  
 Commemoration I had told my friend [F. J.]  
 Child that it was impossible — that I was dull  
 as a door-mat. But the next day something  
 gave me a jog and the whole thing came out  
 of me with a rush. I sat up all night writing  
 it out clear, and took it on the morning of the  
 day to Child. 'I have something, but don't  
 yet know what it is, or whether it will do.

Look at it and tell me.' He went a little way apart with it under an elm-tree in the College Yard. He read a passage here and there, brought it back to me and said: 'Do? I should think so! Don't you be scared.' And I was n't, but virtue enough had gone out of me to make me weak for a fortnight after. I was amazed at the praises I got. Trevelyan told me afterwards that he never could have carried through the abolition of purchase in the British Army but for the re-enforcement he got from that poem."

A few months after the delivery of the *Ode* the proposal to reprint it in *Harvard Memorial Biographies* led to a correspondence with the editor, Col. T. W. Higginson, in which some emendations and additions were proposed. "Your criticism," Lowell writes, "is perfectly just, and I am much obliged to you for it — though I might defend myself, I believe, by some constructions even looser in some of the Greek choruses. But, on the whole, where I have my choice I prefer to make sense. The fact is that the *Ode* was written at a heat — such a one, indeed, as leaves one colder than common afterwards — and I have hardly looked at it since. There is a horrible truth in the *litera scripta manet*, and the confounded things make mouths at us when we try to alter, but I think *this* may do: —

'Ere yet the sharp, decisive word  
Redden the cannon's lips, and while the sword.'  
(Stanza v.)

On looking farther, I find to my intense disgust a verse without a mate in the last stanza but one, and I must put in a patch. If I had only kept my manuscript! We must read

'And bid her navies, that so lately hurled  
Their crashing battle, hold their thunders in,'

or else the poor 'world' just below will have no law of gravitation to hold itself up by. I know I had something better originally, but I can't get it back. *Item*, in the eighth please make this change: —

'Virtue treads paths that end not in the grave,  
But through those constellations go  
That shed celestial influence on the brave.  
If life were but to draw this dusty breath  
That doth our wits enslave,  
And with the crowd to hurry to and fro,  
Seeking we know not what, and finding death,  
These did unwisely; but if living be,  
As some are born to know,  
The power to ennoble, and inspire  
In other souls our brave desire  
For fruit, not leaves, of Time's immortal tree,  
These truly live, our thought's essential fire,  
And to the saner,' etc.

There! I won't open the book again, or I shall write you another ode instead of mending this. But in this latter passage the metre wanted limbering a little — it was *built* too

much with blank-verse bricks — and I think I have bettered it, at least to the ear." The second only of these emendations was incorporated in the ode at some later date.

In writing some time afterward to J. B. Thayer, who had been raising some questions regarding the structure of the *Ode*, Lowell again recurred to the manner in which he had been possessed by the poem. "I am not sure," he writes, "if I understand what you say about the tenth strophe. You will observe that it leads naturally to the eleventh, and that I there justify a certain narrowness in it as an expression of the popular feeling as well as my own. I confess I have never got over the feeling of wrath with which (just after the death of my nephew Willie) I read in an English paper that nothing was to be hoped of an army officered by tailors' apprentices and butcher-boys. The poem was written with a vehement speed, which I thought I had lost in the skirts of my professor's gown. Till within two days of the celebration I was hopelessly dumb, and then it all came with a rush, literally making me lean (*mi fece magro*) and so nervous that I was weeks in getting over it. I was longer in getting the new (eleventh) strophe to my mind than in writing the rest of the poem. In *that* I hardly changed a word, and it was so undeliberate that I did not find out till after it was printed that some of the verses lacked corresponding rhymes. . . . I doubt you are right in wishing it more historical. But then I could not have written it. I had put the ethical and political view so often in prose that I was weary of it. The motives of the war? I had impatiently argued them again and again — but for an ode they must be in the blood and not the memory. One of my great defects (I have always been conscious of it) is an impatience of mind which makes me contemptuously indifferent about arguing matters that have once become convictions."

Once more, in 1877, in writing to the same correspondent, he quotes a passage from a paper in the *Cornhill*: "Mr. Lowell's *Commemoration Ode* is a specimen of the formless poem of unequal lines and broken stanzas supposed to be in the manner of Pindar, but truly the descendant of our royalist poet's [Cowley] 'majestic numbers.'" In an inadvertence on this Lowell goes on: "Whatever my other shortcomings (and they are plenty, as none knows better than I), want of reflection is not one of them. The poems [this and Lowell's other odes] were all intended for public recitation. That was the first thing to be considered. I suppose my ear (from long and painful practice on  $\Phi$  B K poems) has more technical experience in this than almost any. The least tedious measure is the rhymed heroic,

but this, too, palls unless relieved by passages of wit or even mere fun. A long series of uniform stanzas (I am always speaking of public recitation) with regularly recurring rhymes produces somnolence among the men and a desperate resort to their fans on the part of the women. No method has yet been invented by which the train of thought or feeling can be shunted off from the epical to the lyrical track. My ears have been jolted often enough over the sleepers on such occasions to know that. I know *something* (of course an American can't know much) about Pindar. But *his* odes had the advantage of being chanted. Now, my problem was to contrive a measure which should not be tedious by uniformity, which should vary with varying moods, in which the transitions (including those of the voice) should be managed without jar. I at first thought of mixed rhymed and blank verses of unequal measures, like those in the choruses of *Samson Agonistes*, which are in the main masterly. Of course Milton *deliberately* departed from that stricter form of the Greek Chorus to which it was bound quite as much (I suspect) by the law of its musical accompaniment as by any sense of symmetry. I wrote some stanzas of the *Commemoration Ode* on this theory at first, leaving some verses without a rhyme to match. But my ear was better pleased when the rhyme, coming at a longer interval, as a far-off echo rather than instant reverberation, produced the same effect almost, and yet was grateful by unexpectedly recalling an association and faint reminiscence of consonance."

## I

WEAK-WINGED is song,  
Nor aims at that clear-ethered height  
Whither the brave deed climbs for light:  
We seem to do them wrong,  
Bringing our robin's-leaf to deck their  
hearse  
Who in warm life-blood wrote their nobler  
verse,  
Our trivial song to honor those who come  
With ears attuned to strenuous trump and  
drum,  
And shaped in squadron-strophes their de-  
sire,  
Live battle-odes whose lines were steel and  
fire:  
Yet sometimes feathered words are  
strong,  
A gracious memory to buoy up and save  
From Lethe's dreamless ooze, the common  
grave  
Of the unventurous throng.

## II

To-day our Reverend Mother welcomes  
back  
Her wisest Scholars, those who under-  
stood  
The deeper teaching of her mystic tome,  
And offered their fresh lives to make it  
good:  
No lore of Greece or Rome,  
No science peddling with the names of  
things,  
Or reading stars to find inglorious fates,  
Can lift our life with wings  
Far from Death's idle gulf that for the  
many waits,  
And lengthen out our dates  
With that clear fame whose memory sings  
In manly hearts to come, and nerves them  
and dilates:  
Nor such thy teaching, Mother of us all!  
Not such the trumpet-call  
Of thy diviner mood,  
That could thy sons entice  
From happy homes and toils, the fruitful  
nest  
Of those half-virtues which the world calls  
best,  
Into War's tumult rude;  
But rather far that stern device  
The sponsors chose that round thy cradle  
stood  
In the dim, unventured wood,  
The VERITAS that lurks beneath  
The letter's unprolific sheath,  
Life of whate'er makes life worth living,  
Seed-grain of high emprise, immortal food,  
One heavenly thing whereof earth hath  
the giving.

## III

Many loved Truth, and lavished life's best  
oil  
Amid the dust of books to find her,  
Content at last, for guerdon of their toil,  
With the east mantle she hath left be-  
hind her.  
Many in sad faith sought for her,  
Many with crossed hands sighed for  
her;  
But these, our brothers, fought for  
her,  
At life's dear peril wrought for her,  
So loved her that they died for her,  
Tasting the raptured fleetness



Of her divine completeness:  
 Their higher instinct knew  
 Those love her best who to themselves are  
 true,  
 And what they dare to dream of, dare to  
 do;  
 They followed her and found her  
 Where all may hope to find,  
 Not in the ashes of the burnt-out mind,  
 But beautiful, with danger's sweetness  
 round her.  
 Where faith made whole with deed  
 Breathes its awakening breath  
 Into the lifeless creed,  
 They saw her plumed and mailed,  
 With sweet, stern face unveiled,  
 And all-repaying eyes, look proud on them  
 in death.

## IV

Our slender life runs rippling by, and  
 glides  
 Into the silent hollow of the past;  
 What is there that abides  
 To make the next age better for the last?  
 Is earth too poor to give us  
 Something to live for here that shall  
 outlive us?  
 Some more substantial boon  
 Than such as flows and ebbs with Fortune's  
 fickle moon?  
 The little that we see  
 From doubt is never free;  
 The little that we do  
 Is but half-nobly true;  
 With our laborious hiving  
 What men call treasure, and the gods call  
 loss,  
 Life seems a jest of Fate's contriving,  
 Only secure in every one's conniving,  
 A long account of nothings paid with loss,  
 Where we poor puppets, jerked by unseen  
 wires,  
 After our little hour of strut and rave,  
 With all our pasteboard passions and de-  
 sires,  
 Loves, hates, ambitions, and immortal fires,  
 Are tossed pell-mell together in the  
 grave.  
 But stay! no age was e'er degenerate,  
 Unless men held it at too cheap a rate,  
 For in our likeness still we shape our  
 fate.  
 Ah, there is something here  
 Unfathomed by the cynic's sneer,

Something that gives our feeble light  
 A high immunity from Night,  
 Something that leaps life's narrow bars  
 To claim its birthright with the hosts of  
 heaven;  
 A seed of sunshine that can leaven  
 Our earthly dullness with the beams of  
 stars,  
 And glorify our clay  
 With light from fountains elder than the  
 Day;  
 A conscience more divine than we,  
 A gladness fed with secret tears,  
 A vexing, forward-reaching sense  
 Of some more noble permanence;  
 A light across the sea,  
 Which haunts the soul and will not let it be,  
 Still beaconing from the heights of unde-  
 generate years.

## V

Whither leads the path  
 To ampler fates that leads?  
 Not down through flowery meads,  
 To reap an aftermath  
 Of youth's vainglorious weeds,  
 But up the steep, amid the wrath  
 And shock of deadly-hostile creeds,  
 Where the world's best hope and stay  
 By battle's flashes gropes a desperate way,  
 And every turf the fierce foot clings to  
 bleeds.  
 Peace hath her not ignoble wreath,  
 Ere yet the sharp, decisive word  
 Light the black lips of cannon, and the  
 sword  
 Dreams in its easeful sheath;  
 But some day the live coal behind the  
 thought,  
 Whether from Baäl's stone obscene,  
 Or from the shrine serene  
 Of God's pure altar brought,  
 Bursts up in flame; the war of tongue and  
 pen  
 Learns with what deadly purpose it was  
 fraught,  
 And, helpless in the fiery passion caught,  
 Shakes all the pillared state with shock of  
 men:  
 Some day the soft Ideal that we wooed  
 Confronts us fiercely, foe-beset, pursued,  
 And cries reproachful: "Was it, then, my  
 praise,  
 And not myself was loved? Prove now  
 thy truth;

I claim of thee the promise of thy youth;  
Give me thy life, or cower in empty phrase,  
The victim of thy genius, not its mate!"

Life may be given in many ways,  
And loyalty to Truth be sealed  
As bravely in the closet as the field,  
So bountiful is Fate;  
But then to stand beside her,  
When craven churls deride her,  
To front a lie in arms and not to yield,  
This shows, methinks, God's plan  
And measure of a stalwart man,  
Limbed like the old heroic breeds,  
Who stands self-poised on manhood's  
solid earth,

Not forced to frame excuses for his  
birth,  
Fed from within with all the strength he  
needs.

## VI

Such was he, our Martyr-Chief,  
Whom late the Nation he had led,  
With ashes on her head,  
Wept with the passion of an angry grief:  
Forgive me, if from present things I turn  
To speak what in my heart will beat and  
burn,  
And hang my wreath on his world-honored  
urn.

Nature, they say, doth dote,  
And cannot make a man  
Save on some worn-out plan,  
Repeating us by rote:

For him her Old-World moulds aside she  
threw,  
And, choosing sweet clay from the  
breast

Of the unexhausted West,  
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,  
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and  
true.

How beautiful to see  
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,  
Who loved his charge, but never loved to  
lead;

One whose meek flock the people joyed to  
be,

Not lured by any cheat of birth,  
But by his clear-grained human worth,  
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!

They knew that outward grace is dust;  
They could not choose but trust

In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,  
And supple-tempered will

That bent like perfect steel to spring again  
and thrust.

His was no lonely mountain-peak of  
mind,

Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy  
bars,

A sea-mark now, now lost in vapors  
blind;

Broad prairie rather, genial, level-  
lined,

Fruitful and friendly for all human  
kind,

Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of lofti-  
est stars.

Nothing of Europe here,  
Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward  
still,

Ere any names of Serf and Peer  
Could Nature's equal scheme deface  
And thwart her genial will;

Here was a type of the true elder race,  
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us  
face to face.

I praise him not; it were too late;  
And some innative weakness there must be  
In him who condescends to victory  
Such as the Present gives, and cannot wait,  
Safe in himself as in a fate.

So always firmly he:  
He knew to bide his time,

And can his fame abide,

Still patient in his simple faith sublime,  
Till the wise years decide.

Great captains, with their guns and  
drums,

Disturb our judgment for the hour,

But at last silence comes;

These all are gone, and, standing like a  
tower,

Our children shall behold his fame.

The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing  
man,

Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not  
blame,

New birth of our new soil, the first Amer-  
ican.

## VII

Long as man's hope insatiate can discern  
Or only guess some more inspiring  
goal

Outside of Self, enduring as the pole,  
Along whose course the flying axes burn  
Of spirits bravely-pitched, earth's man-  
lier brood;

Long as below we cannot find  
 The meed that stills the inexorable mind;  
 So long this faith to some ideal Good,  
 Under whatever mortal names it masks,  
 Freedom, Law, Country, this ethereal  
 mood  
 That thanks the Fates for their severer  
 tasks,  
 Feeling its challenged pulses leap,  
 While others skulk in subterfuges cheap,  
 And, set in Danger's van, has all the boon  
 it asks,  
 Shall win man's praise and woman's love,  
 Shall be a wisdom that we set above  
 All other skills and gifts to culture dear,  
 A virtue round whose forehead we in-  
 wreath  
 Laurels that with a living passion breathe  
 When other crowns grow, while we twine  
 them, sear.  
 What brings us thronging these high  
 rites to pay,  
 And seal these hours the noblest of our year,  
 Save that our brothers found this better  
 way?

## VIII

✓We sit here in the Promised Land  
 That flows with Freedom's honey and  
 milk;  
 But 't was they won it, sword in hand,  
 Making the nettle danger soft for us as silk.  
 We welcome back our bravest and our  
 best; —  
 Ah me! not all! some come not with the  
 rest,  
 Who went forth brave and bright as any  
 here!  
 I strive to mix some gladness with my strain,  
 But the sad strings complain,  
 And will not please the ear:  
 I sweep them for a pæan, but they wane  
 Again and yet again  
 Into a dirge, and die away, in pain.  
 In these brave ranks I only see the gaps,  
 Thinking of dear ones whom the dumb  
 turf wraps,  
 Dark to the triumph which they died to  
 gain:  
 Fittier may others greet the living,  
 For me the past is unforgiving;  
 I with uncovered head  
 Salute the sacred dead,  
 Who went, and who return not. — Say not  
 so!

'T is not the grapes of Canaan that repay,  
 But the high faith that failed not by the  
 way;  
 Virtue treads paths that end not in the  
 grave;  
 No bar of endless night exiles the brave;  
 And to the saner mind  
 We rather seem the dead that stayed be-  
 hind.  
 Blow, trumpets, all your exultations blow!  
 For never shall their aureoled presence lack:  
 I see them muster in a gleaming row,  
 With ever-youthful brows that nobler show;  
 We find in our dull road their shining  
 track;  
 In every nobler mood  
 We feel the orient of their spirit glow,  
 Part of our life's unalterable good,  
 Of all our saintlier aspiration;  
 They come transfigured back,  
 Secure from change in their high-hearted  
 ways,  
 Beautiful evermore, and with the rays  
 Of morn on their white Shields of Expecta-  
 tion!

## IX

But is there hope to save  
 Even this ethereal essence from the  
 grave?  
 What ever 'scaped Oblivion's subtle  
 wrong  
 Save a few clarion names, or golden threads  
 of song?  
 Before my musing eye  
 ✓The mighty ones of old sweep by,  
 Disvoiced now and insubstantial things,  
 As noisy once as we; poor ghosts of kings,  
 Shadows of empire wholly gone to dust,  
 And many races, nameless long ago,  
 To darkness driven by that imperious  
 gust  
 Of ever-rushing Time that here doth  
 blow:  
 O visionary world, condition strange,  
 Where naught abiding is but only Change,  
 Where the deep-bolted stars themselves  
 still shift and range!  
 Shall we to more continuance make pre-  
 tence?  
 Renown builds tombs; a life-estate is Wit;  
 And, bit by bit,  
 The cunning years steal all from us but woe;  
 Leaves are we, whose decays no harvest  
 sow.

But, when we vanish hence,  
 Shall they lie forceless in the dark below,  
 Save to make green their little length of  
 sods,  
 Or deepen pansies for a year or two,  
 Who now to us are shining-sweet as gods?  
 Was dying all they had the skill to do?  
 That were not fruitless: but the Soul  
 resents  
 Such short-lived service, as if blind events  
 Ruled without her, or earth could so  
 endure;  
 She claims a more divine investiture  
 Of longer tenure than Fame's airy rents;  
 Whate'er she touches doth her nature  
 share;  
 Her inspiration haunts the ennobled air,  
 Gives eyes to mountains blind,  
 Ears to the deaf earth, voices to the  
 wind,  
 And her clear trump sings succor every-  
 where  
 By lonely bivouacs to the wakeful mind;  
 For soul inherits all that soul could dare:  
 Yea, Manhood hath a wider span  
 And larger privilege of life than man.  
 The single deed, the private sacrifice,  
 So radiant now through proudly-hidden  
 tears,  
 Is covered up erelong from mortal eyes  
 With thoughtless drift of the deciduous  
 years;  
 But that high privilege that makes all  
 men peers,  
 That leap of heart whereby a people rise  
 Up to a noble anger's height,  
 And, flamed on by the Fates, not shrink,  
 but grow more bright,  
 That swift validity in noble veins,  
 Of choosing danger and disdaining  
 shame,  
 Of being set on flame  
 By the pure fire that flies all contact base  
 But wraps its chosen with angelic might,  
 These are imperishable gains,  
 Sure as the sun, medicinal as light,  
 These hold great futures in their lusty  
 reins  
 And certify to earth a new imperial race.

## X

Who now shall sneer?  
 Who dare again to say we trace  
 Our lines to a plebeian race?  
 Roundhead and Cavalier!

Dumb are those names erewhile in battle  
 loud;  
 Dream-footed as the shadow of a cloud,  
 They flit across the ear:  
 That is best blood that hath most iron  
 in 't.  
 To edge resolve with, pouring without stint  
 For what makes manhood dear.  
 Tell us not of Plantagenets,  
 Hapsburgs, and Guelfs, whose thin bloods  
 crawl  
 Down from some victor in a border-brawl!  
 How poor their outworn coronets,  
 Matched with one leaf of that plain civic  
 wreath  
 Our brave for honor's blazon shall bequeath,  
 Through whose desert a rescued Nation  
 sets  
 Her heel on treason, and the trumpet hears  
 Shout victory, tingling Europe's sullen ears  
 With vain resentments and more vain  
 regrets!

## XI

Not in anger, not in pride,  
 Pure from passion's mixture rude  
 Ever to base earth allied,  
 But with far-heard gratitude,  
 Still with heart and voice renewed,  
 To heroes living and dear martyrs dead,  
 The strain should close that consecrates our  
 brave.  
 Lift the heart and lift the head!  
 Lofty be its mood and grave,  
 Not without a martial ring,  
 Not without a prouder tread  
 And a peal of exultation:  
 Little right has he to sing  
 Through whose heart in such an hour  
 Beats no march of conscious power,  
 Sweeps no tumult of elation!  
 'T is no Man we celebrate,  
 By his country's victories great,  
 A hero half, and half the whim of Fate,  
 But the pith and marrow of a Nation  
 Drawing force from all her men,  
 Highest, humblest, weakest, all,  
 For her time of need, and then  
 Pulsing it again through them,  
 Till the basest can no longer cower,  
 Feeling his soul spring up divinely tall,  
 Touched but in passing by her mantle-  
 hem.  
 Come back, then, noble pride, for 't is  
 her dower!



How could poet ever tower,  
 If his passions, hopes, and fears,  
 If his triumphs and his tears,  
 Kept not measure with his people ?  
 Boom, cannon, boom to all the winds and  
 waves !  
 Clash out, glad bells, from every rocking  
 steeple !  
 Banners, adance with triumph, bend your  
 staves !  
 And from every mountain-peak  
 Let beacon-fire to answering beacon  
 speak,  
 Katahdin tell Monadnock, Whiteface  
 he,  
 And so leap on in light from sea to sea,  
 Till the glad news be sent  
 Across a kindling continent,  
 Making earth feel more firm and air breathe  
 braver :  
 "Be proud ! for she is saved, and all have  
 helped to save her !  
 She that lifts up the manhood of the  
 poor,  
 She of the open soul and open door,  
 With room about her hearth for all  
 mankind !  
 The fire is dreadful in her eyes no  
 more ;  
 From her bold front the helm she doth  
 unbind,  
 Sends all her handmaid armies back to  
 spin,  
 And bids her navies, that so lately  
 hurled  
 Their crashing battle, hold their thun-  
 ders in,  
 Swimming like birds of calm along the  
 unarmful shore.

No challenge sends she to the elder  
 world,  
 That looked askance and hated ; a light  
 scorn  
 Plays o'er her mouth, as round her  
 mighty knees  
 She calls her children back, and waits  
 the morn  
 Of nobler day, enthroned between her sub-  
 ject seas."

## XII

Bow down, dear Land, for thou hast found  
 release !  
 Thy God, in these distempered days,  
 Hath taught thee the sure wisdom of  
 His ways,  
 And through thine enemies hath wrought  
 thy peace !  
 / Bow down in prayer and praise!  
 No poorest in thy borders but may now  
 Lift to the juster skies a man's enfran-  
 chised brow.  
 O Beautiful ! my Country ! ours once  
 more !  
 Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair  
 O'er such sweet brows as never other wore,  
 And letting thy set lips,  
 Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,  
 The rosy edges of their smile lay bare,  
 What words divine of lover or of poet  
 Could tell our love and make thee know it,  
 Among the Nations bright beyond com-  
 pare ?  
 What were our lives without thee ?  
 What all our lives to save thee ?  
 We reck not what we gave thee ;  
 We will not dare to doubt thee,  
 But ask whatever else, and we will dare !

## L'ENVOI

## TO THE MUSE

WHITHER ? Albeit I follow fast,  
 In all life's circuit I but find,  
 Not where thou art, but where thou wast,  
 Sweet beckoner, more fleet than wind !  
 I haunt the pine-dark solitudes,  
 With soft brown silence carpeted,  
 And plot to snare thee in the woods :  
 Peace I o'ertake, but thou art fled !

I find the rock where thou didst rest,  
 The moss thy skimming foot hath prest ;  
 All Nature with thy parting thrills,  
 Like branches after birds new-flown ;  
 Thy passage hill and hollow fills  
 With hints of virtue not their own ;  
 In dimples still the water slips  
 Where thou hast dipt thy finger-tips ;  
 Just, just beyond, forever burn  
 Gleams of a grace without return ;

Upon thy shade I plant my foot,  
And through my frame strange raptures  
shoot;

All of thee but thyself I grasp;  
I seem to fold thy luring shape,  
And vague air to my bosom clasp,  
Thou lithe, perpetual Escape !

One mask and then another drops,  
And thou art secret as before:

Sometimes with flooded ear I list,  
And hear thee, wondrous organist,  
From mighty continental stops  
A thunder of new music pour;  
Through pipes of earth and air and stone  
Thy inspiration deep is blown;  
Through mountains, forests, open downs,  
Lakes, railroads, prairies, states, and towns,  
Thy gathering fugue goes rolling on  
From Maine to utmost Oregon;  
The factory-wheels in cadence hum,  
From brawling parties concords come;  
All this I hear, or seem to hear,  
But when, enchanted, I draw near  
To mate with words the various theme,  
Life seems a whiff of kitchen steam,  
History an organ-grinder's thrum,

For thou hast slept from it and me  
And all thine organ-pipes left dumb,  
Most mutable Perversity !

Not weary yet, I still must seek,  
And hope for luck next day, next week;  
I go to see the great man ride,  
Shiplike, the swelling human tide  
That floods to bear him into port,  
Trophied from Senate-hall and Court;  
Thy magnetism, I feel it there,  
Thy rhythmic presence fleet and rare,  
Making the Mob a moment fine  
With glimpses of their own Divine,  
As in their demigod they see

Their cramped ideal soaring free;  
'T was thou didst bear the fire about,  
That, like the springing of a mine,  
Sent up to heaven the street-long shout;  
Full well I know that thou wast here,  
It was thy breath that brushed my ear;  
But vainly in the stress and whirl  
I dive for thee, the moment's pearl.

Through every shape thou well canst  
run,  
Proteus, 'twixt rise and set of sun,  
Well pleased with logger-camps in Maine

As where Milan's pale Duomo lies  
A stranded glacier on the plain,  
Its peaks and pinnacles of ice  
Melted in many a quaint device,  
And sees, above the city's din,  
Afar its silent Alpine kin:  
I track thee over carpets deep  
To wealth's and beauty's inmost keep;  
Across the sand of bar-room floors  
Mid the stale reek of boosing boors;  
Where browse the hay-field's fragrant  
heats,

Or the fail-heart of Autumn beats;  
I dog thee through the market's throngs  
To where the sea with myriad tongues  
Laps the green edges of the pier,  
And the tall ships that eastward steer,  
Curtsy their farewells to the town,  
O'er the curved distance lessening down;  
I follow allwhere for thy sake,  
Touch thy robe's hem, but ne'er o'ertake,  
Find where, scarce yet unmoving, lies,  
Warm from thy limbs, thy last disguise;  
But thou another shape hast donned,  
And lurest still just, just beyond !

But here a voice, I know not whence,  
Thrills clearly through my inward sense,  
Saying : "See where she sits at home  
While thou in search of her dost roam !  
All summer long her ancient wheel

Whirls humming by the open door,  
Or, when the hickory's social zeal  
Sets the wide chimney in a roar,  
Close-nestled by the tinkling hearth,  
It modulates the household mirth  
With that sweet serious undertone  
Of duty, music all her own;  
Still as of old she sits and spins  
Our hopes, our sorrows, and our sins;  
With equal care she twines the fates  
Of cottages and mighty states;  
She spins the earth, the air, the sea,  
The maiden's unschooled fancy free,  
The boy's first love, the man's first grief,  
The budding and the fall o' the leaf;  
The piping west-wind's snowy care  
For her their cloudy fleeces spare,  
Or from the thorns of evil times  
She can glean wool to twist her rhymes;  
Morning and noon and eve supply  
To her their fairest tints for dye,  
But ever through her twirling thread  
There spires one line of warmest red,  
Tinged from the homestead's genial heart,

The stamp and warrant of her art;  
With this Time's sickle she outwears,  
And blunts the Sisters' baffled shears.

"Harass her not: thy heat and stir  
But greater coyness breed in her;  
Yet thou mayst find, ere Age's frost,  
Thy long apprenticeship not lost,  
Learning at last that Stygian Fate  
Unbends to him that knows to wait.  
The Muse is womanish, nor deigns  
Her love to him that pules and plains;  
With proud, averted face she stands  
To him that woos with empty hands.  
Make thyself free of Manhood's guild;  
Pull down thy barns and greater build;

The wood, the mountain, and the plain  
Wave breast-deep with the poet's grain;  
Pluck thou the sunset's fruit of gold,  
Glean from the heavens and ocean old;  
From fireside lone and trampling street  
Let thy life garner daily wheat;  
The epic of a man rehearse,  
Be something better than thy verse;  
Make thyself rich, and then the Muse  
Shall court thy precious interviews,  
Shall take thy head upon her knee,  
And such enchantment lilt to thee,  
That thou shalt hear the life-blood flow  
From farthest stars to grass-blades low,  
And find the Listener's science still  
Transcends the Singer's deepest skill!"

## THE CATHEDRAL

To

MR. JAMES T. FIELDS

MY DEAR FIELDS:

Dr. Johnson's sturdy self-respect led him to invent the Bookseller as a substitute for the Patron. My relations with you have enabled me to discover how pleasantly the Friend may replace the Bookseller. Let me record my sense of many thoughtful services by associating your name with a poem which owes its appearance in this form to your partiality.

Cordially yours,

J. R. LOWELL.

CAMBRIDGE, November 29, 1869.

*The Cathedral* was printed first in *The Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1870, but was shortly after published in a volume by itself with changes and additions. The poem was wrought at apparently with something of the loving enthusiasm which we are wont to ascribe to the builders of actual cathedrals. It was written in the summer of 1869 and returned to frequently before publication. When in the midst of the work he wrote to Mr. Howells, then editor of the *Atlantic*, "Up to time indeed! The fear is not about time, but space. You won't have room in your menagerie for such a displeasayousaurus. The verses if stretched end to end in a continuous line would go clear round the cathedral they celebrate, and nobody (I fear) the wiser. I can't tell yet what they are. There seems a bit of clean carving here and there, a solid buttress or two, and perhaps a gleam through painted glass—but I have not copied it out yet, nor indeed read it over

consecutively." A little later he wrote to Miss Norton: "I hope it is good, for it fairly trussed me at last and bore me up as high as my poor lungs will bear into the heaven of invention. I was happy writing it, and so steeped in it that if I had written to you it would have been in blank verse. It is a kind of religious poem, and is called *A Day at Chartres*. . . . I can't tell yet how it will stand. Already I am beginning to—to—you know what I mean—to taste my champagne next morning."

The poem received some comment from two distinguished critics; Mr. Leslie Stephen and Mr. Ruskin. To the former Lowell wrote: "I am glad you liked *The Cathedral* and sorry for anything in it you did n't like. The name was none of my choosing. I called it *A Day at Chartres*, and Fields rechristened it. You see with my name the episode of the Britons comes in naturally enough (it is historical, by the

way). The truth is, I had no notion of being satirical, but wrote what I did just as I might have said it to you in badinage. But of course the tone is lost in print. Anyhow, there is *one* Englishman I am fond enough of to balance any spite I might have against others, as you know. But I have n't a particle. If I had met two of my own countrymen at Chartres I should have been quite as free with them." In reply to some advice and strictures of Mr. Ruskin, he wrote to Mr. Norton: "I am glad to find that the poem *sticks*. Those who liked it at first like it still, some of them better than ever, some extravagantly. At any rate it wrote itself; all of a sudden it was *there*, and that is something in its favor. Now Ruskin wants me to go over it with a file. That is just what I did. I wrote in pencil, then copied it out in

ink, and worked over it as I never worked over anything before. I may fairly say there is not a word in it over which I have not thought, not an objection which I did not foresee and maturely consider. Well, in my second copy I made many changes, as I thought for the better, and then put it away in my desk to cool for three weeks or so. When I came to print it, I put back, I believe, *every one* of the original readings which I had changed. Those which had come to me were far better than those I had come at. Only one change I made (for the worse), in order to escape a rhyme that had crept in without my catching it." Ruskin made some verbal criticism, which Lowell proceeded to examine, and the reader will find the discussion in the notes at the end of this volume.

FAR through the memory shines a happy  
day,

Cloudless of care, down-shod to every  
sense,

And simply perfect from its own resource,  
As to a bee the new campanula's  
Illuminate seclusion swung in air.

Such days are not the prey of setting suns,  
Nor ever blurred with mist of after-  
thought;

Like words made magical by poets dead,  
Wherein the music of all meaning is  
The sense hath garnered or the soul  
divined,

They mingle with our life's ethereal part,  
Sweetening and gathering sweetness ever-  
more,

By beauty's franchise disenthralled of time.

I can recall, nay, they are present still,  
Parts of myself, the perfume of my mind,  
Days that seem farther off than Homer's  
now

Ere yet the child had loudened to the boy,  
And I, recluse from playmates, found per-  
force

Companionship in things that not denied  
Nor granted wholly; as is Nature's wont,  
Who, safe in uncontaminate reserve,  
Lets us mistake our longing for her love,  
And mocks with various echo of ourselves.

These first sweet frauds upon our con-  
sciousness,

That blend the sensual with its imaged  
world,

These virginal cognitions, gifts of morn,

Ere life grow noisy, and slower-footed  
thought

Can overtake the rapture of the sense,  
To thrust between ourselves and what we  
feel,

Have something in them secretly divine.  
Vainly the eye, once schooled to serve the  
brain,

With pains deliberate studies to renew  
The ideal vision: second-thoughts are  
prose;

For beauty's acme hath a term as brief  
As the wave's poise before it break in  
pearl.

Our own breath dims the mirror of the  
sense,

Looking too long and closely: at a flash  
We snatch the essential grace of meaning  
out,

And that first passion beggars all behind,  
Heirs of a tamer transport prepossessed.  
Who, seeing once, has truly seen again  
The gray vague of unsympathizing sea  
That dragged his Fancy from her moor-  
ings back

To shores inhospitable of eldest time,  
Till blank foreboding of earth-generated  
powers,

Pitiless seignories in the elements,  
Omnipotences blind that darkling smite,  
Mistgave him, and repaganized the world?  
Yet, by some subtler touch of sympathy,  
These primal apprehensions, dimly stirred,  
Perplex the eye with pictures from within.  
This hath made poets dream of lives fore-  
gone

In worlds fantastical, more fair than ours;



So Memory cheats us, glimpsing half-revealed.

Even as I write she tries her wonted spell  
In that continuous redbreast boding rain:  
The bird I hear sings not from yonder elm;  
But the flown ecstasy my childhood heard  
Is vocal in my mind, renewed by him,  
Haply made sweeter by the accumulate  
thrill

That threads my undivided life and steals  
A pathos from the years and graves between.

I know not how it is with other men,  
Whom I but guess, deciphering myself;  
For me, once felt is so felt nevermore.  
The fleeting relish at sensation's brim  
Had in it the best ferment of the wine.  
One spring I knew as never any since:  
All night the surges of the warm southwest  
Boomed intermittent through the wallowing  
elms,

And brought a morning from the Gulf  
adrift,

Omnipotent with sunshine, whose quick  
charm

Startled with crocuses the sullen turf  
And wiled the bluebird to his whiff of song:  
One summer hour abides, what time I  
perched,

Dappled with noonday, under simmering  
leaves,

And pulled the pulpy oxhearts, while aloof  
An oriole clattered and the robins shrilled,  
Denouncing me an alien and a thief:

One morn of autumn lords it o'er the rest,  
When in the lane I watched the ash-leaves  
fall,

Balancing softly earthward without wind,  
Or twirling with directer impulse down  
On those fallen yesterday, now barbed with  
frost,

While I grew pensive with the pensive year:  
And once I learned how marvellous winter  
was,

When past the fence-rails, downy-gray with  
rime,

I creaked adventurous o'er the spangled  
crust

That made familiar fields seem far and  
strange

As those stark wastes that whiten endlessly  
In ghastly solitude about the pole,  
And gleam relentless to the unsettling sun:  
Instant the candid chambers of my brain

Were painted with these sovran images;  
And later visions seem but copies pale  
From those unfading frescos of the past,  
Which I, young savage, in my age of flint,  
Gazed at, and dimly felt a power in me  
Parted from Nature by the joy in her  
That doubtfully revealed me to myself.  
Thenceforward I must stand outside the  
gate;

And paradise was paradise the more,  
Known once and barred against satiety.

What we call Nature, all outside ourselves,  
Is but our own conceit of what we see,  
Our own reaction upon what we feel;  
The world's a woman to our shifting mood,  
Feeling with us, or making due pretence;  
And therefore we the more persuade our-  
selves

To make all things our thought's confeder-  
ates,

Conniving with us in whate'er we dream.  
So when our Fancy seeks analogies,  
Though she have hidden what she after  
finds,

She loves to cheat herself with feigned sur-  
prise.

I find my own complexion everywhere:  
No rose, I doubt, was ever, like the first,  
A marvel to the bush it dawned upon,  
The rapture of its life made visible,  
The mystery of its yearning realized,  
As the first babe to the first woman born;  
No falcon ever felt delight of wings  
As when, an eyas, from the stolid cliff  
Loosing himself, he followed his high heart  
To swim on sunshine, masterless as wind;  
And I believe the brown earth takes delight  
In the new snowdrop looking back at her,  
To think that by some vernal alchemy  
It could transmute her darkness into pearl;  
What is the buxom peony after that,  
With its coarse constancy of hoyden blush?  
What the full summer to that wonder new?

But, if in nothing else, in us there is  
A sense fastidious hardly reconciled  
To the poor makeshifts of life's scenery,  
Where the same slide must double all its  
parts,

Shoved in for Tarsus and hitched back for  
Tyre.

I blame not in the soul this daintiness,  
Rasher of surfeit than a humming-bird,  
In things indifferent by sense purveyed;

It argues her an immortality  
And dateless incomes of experience,  
This unthrif housekeeping that will not  
brook

A dish warmed-over at the feast of life,  
And finds Twice stale, served with what-  
ever sauce.

Nor matters much how it may go with me  
Who dwell in Grub Street and am proud to  
drudge

Where men, my betters, wet their crust  
with tears:

Use can make sweet the peach's shady side,  
That only by reflection tastes of sun.

But she, my Princess, who will sometimes  
deign

My garret to illumine till the walls,  
Narrow and dingy, scrawled with hack-  
neyed thought

(Poor Richard slowly elbowing Plato out),  
Dilate and drape themselves with tapestries  
Nausikaa might have stooped o'er, while,  
between,

Mirrors, effaced in their own clearness, send  
Her only image on through deepening  
deeps

With endless repercussion of delight, —  
Bringer of life, witching each sense to soul,  
That sometimes almost gives me to believe  
I might have been a poet, gives at least  
A brain desaxoned, an ear that makes  
Music where none is, and a keener pang  
Of exquisite surmise outleaping thought, —  
Her will I pamper in her luxury:  
No crumpled rose-leaf of too careless choice  
Shall bring a northern nightmare to her  
dreams,

Vexing with sense of exile; hers shall be  
The invitate firstlings of experience,  
Vibrations felt but once and felt life long:  
Oh, more than half-way turn that Grecian  
front

Upon me, while with self-rebuke I spell,  
On the plain fillet that confines thy hair  
In conscious bounds of seeming uncon-  
straint,

The *Naught in overplus*, thy race's badge!

One feast for her I secretly designed  
In that Old World so strangely beautiful  
To us the disinherited of eld, —  
A day at Chartres, with no soul beside  
To roil with pedant prate my joy serene  
And make the minster shy of confidence.

I went, and, with the Saxon's pious care,  
First ordered dinner at the pea-green inn,  
The flies and I its only customers.

Eluding these, I loitered through the town,  
With hope to take my minster unawares  
In its grave solitude of memory.

A pretty burgh, and such as Fancy loves  
For bygone grandeurs, faintly rumorously  
now

Upon the mind's horizon, as of storm  
Brooding its dreamy thunders far aloof,  
That mingle with our mood, but not dis-  
turb.

Its once grim bulwarks, tamed to lovers'  
walks,

Look down unwatchful on the sliding Eure,  
Whose listless leisure suits the quiet place,  
Lisping among his shallows homelike sounds  
At Concord and by Bankside heard before.  
Chance led me to a public pleasure-ground,  
Where I grew kindly with the merry groups,  
And blessed the Frenchman for his simple  
art

Of being domestic in the light of day.  
His language has no word, we growl, for  
Home;

But he can find a fireside in the sun,  
Play with his child, make love, and shriek  
his mind,

By throngs of strangers undisprivacied.  
He makes his life a public gallery,  
Nor feels himself till what he feels comes  
back

In manifold reflection from without;  
While we, each pore alert with conscious-  
ness,

Hide our best selves as we had stolen them,  
And each bystander a detective were,  
Keen-eyed for every chink of undisguise.

So, musing o'er the problem which was  
best, —

A life wide-windowed, shining all abroad,  
Or curtains drawn to shield from sight  
profane

The rites we pay to the mysterious I, —  
With outward senses furloughed and head  
bowed

I followed some fine instinct in my feet,  
Till, to unbend me from the loom of  
thought,

Looking up suddenly, I found mine eyes  
Confronted with the minster's vast repose.  
Silent and gray as forest-leaguered cliff  
Left inland by the ocean's slow retreat,

That hears afar the breeze-borne rote and  
longs,  
Remembering shocks of surf that clomb  
and fell,

Spume-sliding down the baffled decuman,  
It rose before me, patiently remote  
From the great tides of life it breasted once,  
Hearing the noise of men as in a dream.

I stood before the triple northern port,  
Where dedicated shapes of saints and kings,  
Stern faces bleared with immemorial watch,  
Looked down benignly grave and seemed

to say,

*Ye come and go incessant; we remain  
Safe in the hallowed quiets of the past;  
Be reverent, ye who flit and are forgot,  
Of faith so nobly realized as this.*

I seem to have heard it said by learned  
folk

Who drench you with æsthetics till you feel  
As if all beauty were a ghastly bore,  
The faucet to let loose a wash of words,  
That Gothic is not Grecian, therefore worse;  
But, being convinced by much experiment  
How little inventiveness there is in man,  
Grave copier of copies, I give thanks  
For a new relish, careless to inquire  
My pleasure's pedigree, if so it please,  
Nobly, I mean, nor renegade to art.  
The Grecian gluts me with its perfect-  
ness,

Unanswerable as Euclid, self-contained,  
The one thing finished in this hasty world,  
Forever finished, though the barbarous pit,  
Fanatical on hearsay, stamp and shout  
As if a miracle could be encored.

But ah! this other, this that never ends,  
Still climbing, luring fancy still to climb,  
As full of morals half-divined as life,  
Graceful, grotesque, with ever new surprise  
Of hazardous caprices sure to please,  
Heavy as nightmare, airy-light as fern,  
Imagination's very self in stone!

With one long sigh of infinite release  
From pedantries past, present, or to come,  
I looked, and owned myself a happy Goth.  
Your blood is mine, ye architects of dream,  
Builders of aspiration incomplete,  
So more consummate, souls self-confident,  
Who felt your own thought worthy of re-  
cord

In monumental pomp! No Grecian drop  
Rebukes these veins that leap with kindred  
thrill,

After long exile, to the mother-tongue.

Ovid in Pontus, puling for his Rome  
Of men invirile and disnated dames  
That poison sucked from the Attic bloom  
decayed,

Shrank with a shudder from the blue-eyed  
race

Whose force rough-handed should renew  
the world,

And from the dregs of Romulus express  
Such wine as Dante poured, or he who blew  
Roland's vain blast, or sang the Campeador  
In verse that clanks like armor in the  
charge,

Homeric juice, though brimmed in Odin's  
horn.

And they could build, if not the columned  
fane

That from the height gleamed seaward  
many-hued,

Something more friendly with their ruder  
skies:

The gray spire, molten now in driving mist,  
Now lulled with the incommunicable blue;  
The carvings touched to meaning new with  
snow,

Or commented with fleeting grace of shade;  
The statues, motley as man's memory,  
Partial as that, so mixed of true and false,  
History and legend meeting with a kiss  
Across this bound-mark where their realms  
confine;

The painted windows, freaking gloom with  
glow,

Dusking the sunshine which they seem to  
cheer,

Meet symbol of the senses and the soul,  
And the whole pile, grim with the North-  
man's thought

Of life and death, and doom, life's equal  
fee, —

These were before me: and I gazed  
abashed,

Child of an age that lectures, not creates,  
Plastering our swallow-nests on the awful  
Past,

And twittering round the work of larger  
men,

As we had builded what we but deface.  
Far up the great bells wallowed in delight,  
Tossing their clangors o'er the heedless  
town,

To call the worshippers who never came,  
Or women mostly, in loath twos and threes.  
I entered, reverent of whatever shrine  
Guards piety and solace for my kind

Or gives the soul a moment's truce of God,  
And shared decorous in the ancient rite  
My sterner fathers held idolatrous.

The service over, I was tranced in thought :  
Solemn the deepening vaults, and most to  
me,

Fresh from the fragile realm of deal and  
paint,

Or brick mock-pious with a marble front ;  
Solemn the lift of high-embowered roof,  
The clustered stems that spread in boughs  
disleaved,

Through which the organ blew a dream of  
storm,

Though not more potent to sublime with  
awe

And shut the heart up in tranquillity,  
Than aisles to me familiar that o'erarch  
The conscious silences of brooding woods,  
Centurial shadows, cloisters of the elk :

Yet here was sense of undefined regret,  
Irreparable loss, uncertain what :

Was all this grandeur but anachronism,  
A shell divorced of its informing life,  
Where the priest housed him like a hermit-  
crab,

An alien to that faith of elder days  
That gathered round it this fair shape of  
stone ?

Is old Religion but a spectre now,  
Haunting the solitude of darkened minds,  
Mocked out of memory by the sceptic day ?  
Is there no corner safe from peeping  
Doubt,

Since Gutenberg made thought cosmopolite  
And stretched electric threads from mind  
to mind ?

Nay, did Faith build this wonder ? or did  
Fear,

That makes a fetish and misnames it God  
(Blockish or metaphysic, matters not),  
Contrive this coop to shut its tyrant in,  
Appeased with playthings, that he might  
not harm ?

I turned and saw a beldame on her knees ;  
With eyes astray, she told mechanic beads  
Before some shrine of saintly womanhood,  
Bribed intercessor with the far-off Judge :  
Such my first thought, by kindlier soon re-  
buked,

Pleading for whatsoever touches life  
With upward impulse : be He nowhere  
else,

God is in all that liberates and lifts,

In all that humbles, sweetens, and con-  
soles :

Bless'd the natures shored on every side  
With landmarks of hereditary thought !  
Thrice happy they that wander not life  
long

Beyond near succor of the household faith,  
The guarded fold that shelters, not con-  
fines !

Their steps find patience in familiar paths,  
Printed with hope by loved feet gone be-  
fore

Of parent, child, or lover, glorified  
By simple magic of dividing Time.  
My lids were moistened as the woman  
knelt,

And — was it will, or some vibration faint  
Of sacred Nature, deeper than the will ? —  
My heart occultly felt itself in hers,  
Through mutual intercession gently  
leagued.

Or was it not mere sympathy of brain ?  
A sweetness intellectually conceived  
In simpler creeds to me impossible ?  
A juggle of that pity for ourselves  
In others, which puts on such pretty masks  
And snares self-love with bait of charity ?  
Something of all it might be, or of none :  
Yet for a moment I was snatched away  
And had the evidence of things not seen ;  
For one rapt moment ; then it all came  
back,

This age that blots out life with question-  
marks,

This nineteenth century with its knife and  
glass

That make thought physical, and thrust far  
off

The Heaven, so neighborly with man of  
old,

To voids sparse-sown with alienated stars.

'Tis irrecoverable, that ancient faith,  
Homely and wholesome, suited to the  
time,

With rod or candy for child-minded men :  
No theologic tube, with lens on lens  
Of syllogism transparent, brings it near, —  
At best resolving some new nebula,  
Or blurring some fixed-star of hope to  
mist.

Science was Faith once ; Faith were Science  
now,

Would she but lay her bow and arrows by



And arm her with the weapons of the time.

Nothing that keeps thought out is safe from thought.

For there's no virgin-fort but self-respect,  
And Truth defensive hath lost hold on God.

Shall we treat Him as if He were a child  
That knew not His own purpose? nor dare trust

The Rock of Ages to their chemic tests,  
Lest some day the all-sustaining base divine  
Should fail from under us, dissolved in gas?

The arm'd eye that with a glance discerns  
In a dry blood-speck between ox and man  
Stares helpless at this miracle called life,  
This shaping potency behind the egg,  
This circulation swift of deity,

Where suns and systems inconspicuous float

As the poor blood-disks in our mortal veins.

Each age must worship its own thought of God,

More or less earthy, clarifying still  
With subsidence continuous of the dregs;  
Nor saint nor sage could fix immutably  
The fluent image of the unstable Best,  
Still changing in their very hands that wrought:

To-day's eternal truth To-morrow proved  
Fragile as frost-landscapes on a window-pane.  
Meanwhile Thou smiledst, inaccessible,  
At Thought's own substance made a cage for Thought,

And Truth locked fast with her own master-key;

Nor didst Thou reckon what image man might make

Of his own shadow on the flowing world;  
The climbing instinct was enough for Thee.  
Or wast Thou, then, an ebbing tide that left

Strewn with dead miracle those eldest shores,

For men to dry, and dryly lecture on,  
Thyself thenceforth incapable of flood?

Idle who hopes with prophets to be snatched

By virtue in their mantles left below;  
Shall the soul live on other men's report,  
Herself a pleasing fable of herself?

Man cannot be God's outlaw if he would,  
Nor so abscond him in the caves of sense

But Nature still shall search some crevice out

With messages of splendor from that Source

Which, dive he, soar he, baffles still and lures.

This life were brutish did we not sometimes

Have intimation clear of wider scope,  
Hints of occasion infinite, to keep

The soul alert with noble discontent  
And onward yearnings of unstilled desire;  
Fruitless, except we now and then divined  
A mystery of Purpose, gleaming through  
The secular confusions of the world,  
Whose will we darkly accomplish, doing ours.

No man can think nor in himself perceive,  
Sometimes at waking, in the street sometimes,

Or on the hillside, always unforwarned,  
A grace of being, finer than himself,  
That beckons and is gone,—a larger life  
Upon his own impinging, with swift glimpse

Of spacious circles luminous with mind,  
To which the ethereal substance of his own

Seems but gross cloud to make that visible,  
Touched to a sudden glory round the edge.  
Who that hath known these visitations fleet  
Would strive to make them trite and ritual?

I, that still pray at morning and at eve,  
Loving those roots that feed us from the past,

And prizing more than Plato things I learned

At that best academe, a mother's knee,  
Thrice in my life perhaps have truly prayed,

Thrice, stirred below my conscious self,  
have felt

That perfect disenthralment which is God;  
Nor know I which to hold worst enemy,  
Him who on speculation's windy waste  
Would turn me loose, stript of the raiment warm

By Faith contrived against our nakedness,  
Or him who, cruel-kind, would fain obscure,  
With painted saints and paraphrase of God,  
The soul's east-window of divine surprise.  
Where others worship I but look and long;  
For, though not recreant to my fathers' faith,

Its forms to me are weariness, and most  
That drony vacuum of compulsory prayer,  
Still pumping phrases for the Ineffable,  
Though all the valves of memory gasp and  
wheeze.

Words that have drawn transcendent meanings up

From the best passion of all bygone time,  
Steeped through with tears of triumph and  
remorse,

Sweet with all sainthood, cleansed in martyr-fires,

Can they, so consecrate and so inspired,

By repetition wane to vexing wind?

Alas! we cannot draw habitual breath

In the thin air of life's supream heights,

We cannot make each meal a sacrament,

Nor with our tailors be disbodied souls, —

We men, too conscious of earth's comedy,

Who see two sides, with our posed selves  
debate,

And only for great stakes can be sublime!

Let us be thankful when, as I do here,

We can read Bethel on a pile of stones,

And, seeing where God *has* been, trust in  
Him.

Brave Peter Fischer there in Nuremberg,  
Moulding Saint Sebald's miracles in bronze,  
Put saint and stander-by in that quaint  
garb

Familiar to him in his daily walk,

Not doubting God could grant a miracle

Then and in Nuremberg, if so He would;

But never artist for three hundred years

Hath dared the contradiction ludicrous

Of supernatural in modern clothes.

Perhaps the deeper faith that is to come

Will see God rather in the strenuous doubt,

Than in the creed held as an infant's hand

Holds purposeless whatso is placed therein.

Say it is drift, not progress, none the less,

With the old sextant of the fathers' creed,

We shape our courses by new-risen stars,

And, still lip-loyal to what once was truth,

Smuggle new meanings under ancient  
names,

Unconscious perverts of the Jesuit, Time.

Change is the mask that all Continuance  
wears

To keep us youngsters harmlessly amused;

Meanwhile some ailing or more watchful  
child,

Sitting apart, sees the old eyes gleam out,

Stern, and yet soft with humorous pity too.  
Whilere, men burnt men for a doubtful  
point,

As if the mind were quenchable with fire,  
And Faith danced round them with her  
war-paint on,

Devoutly savage as an Iroquois;

Now Calvin and Servetus at one board

Snuff in grave sympathy a milder roast,

And o'er their claret settle Comte unread.

Fagot and stake were desperately sincere:

Our cooler martyrdoms are done in types;

And flames that shine in controversial eyes

Burn out no brains but his who kindles  
them.

This is no age to get cathedrals built:

Did God, then, wait for one in Bethlehem?

Worst is not yet: lo, where his coming  
looms,

Of earth's anarchic children latest born,

Democracy, a Titan who hath learned

To laugh at Jove's old-fashioned thunder-  
bolts, —

Could he not also forge them, if he would?

He, better skilled, with solvents merciless,

Loosened in air and borne on every wind,

Saps unperceived: the calm Olympian  
height

Of ancient order feels its bases yield,

And pale gods glance for help to gods as  
pale.

What will be left of good or worshipful,

Of spiritual secrets, mysteries,

Of fair religion's guarded heritage,

Heirlooms of soul, passed downward un-  
profaned

From eldest Ind? This Western giant  
coarse,

Scorning refinements which he lacks him-  
self,

Loves not nor heeds the ancestral hierar-  
chies,

Each rank dependent on the next above

In orderly gradation fixed as fate.

King by mere manhood, nor allowing  
aught

Of holier unction than the sweat of toil;

In his own strength sufficient; called to  
solve,

On the rough edges of society,

Problems long sacred to the choicer few,

And improvise what elsewhere men re-  
ceive

As gifts of deity; tough foundling reared

Where every man's his own Melchisedek,

How make him reverent of a King of  
kings ?

Or Judge self-made, executor of laws  
By him not first discussed and voted on ?  
For him no tree of knowledge is forbid,  
Or sweeter if forbid. How save the ark,  
Or holy of holies, unprofaned a day  
From his unscrupulous curiosity  
That handles everything as if to buy,  
Tossing aside what fabrics delicate  
Suit not the rough - and - tumble of his  
ways ?

What hope for those fine-nerved humani-  
ties

That made earth gracious once with gentler  
arts,

Now the rude hands have caught the trick  
of thought

And claim an equal suffrage with the  
brain ?

The born disciple of an elder time,  
(To me sufficient, friendlier than the new,)  
Who in my blood feel motions of the  
Past,

I thank benignant nature most for this, —  
A force of sympathy, or call it lack  
Of character firm-planted, losing me  
From the pent chamber of habitual self  
To dwell enlarged in alien modes of  
thought,

Haply distasteful, wholesomer for that,  
And through imagination to possess,  
As they were mine, the lives of other  
men.

This growth original of virgin soil,  
By fascination felt in opposites,  
Pleases and shocks, entices and perturbs.  
In this brown-fisted rough, this shirt-sleeved  
Cid,

This backwoods Charlemagne of empires  
new,

Whose blundering heel instinctively finds  
out

The goutier foot of speechless dignities,  
Who, meeting Cæsar's self, would slap  
his back,

Call him "Old Horse," and challenge to a  
drink,

My lungs draw braver air, my breast  
dilates

With ampler manhood, and I front both  
worlds,

Of sense and spirit, as my natural fiefs,  
To shape and then reshape them as I will.

It was the first man's charter; why not  
mine ?

How forfeit ? when deposed in other hands ?

Thou shudder'st, Ovid ? Dost in him fore-  
bode

A new avatar of the large-limbed Goth,  
To break, or seem to break, tradition's  
clue,

And chase to dreamland back thy gods  
dethroned ?

I think man's soul dwells nearer to the  
east,

Nearer to morning's fountains than the  
sun;

Herself the source whence all tradition  
sprang,

Herself at once both labyrinth and clue.

The miracle fades out of history,  
But faith and wonder and the primal earth  
Are born into the world with every child.

Shall this self-maker with the prying eyes,  
This creature disenchanted of respect  
By the New World's new fiend, Publicity,  
Whose testing thumb leaves everywhere its  
smutch,

Not one day feel within himself the need  
Of loyalty to better than himself,  
That shall ennoble him with the upward  
look ?

Shall he not catch the Voice that wanders  
earth,

With spiritual summons, dreamed or heard,  
As sometimes, just ere sleep seals up the  
sense,

We hear our mother call from deeps of  
Time,

And, waking, find it vision, — none the less  
The benediction bides, old skies return,

And that unreal thing, preëminent,  
Makes air and dream of all we see and  
feel ?

Shall he divine no strength unmade of  
votes,

Inward, impregnable, found soon as sought,  
Not cognizable of sense, o'er sense su-  
preme ?

Else were he desolate as none before.

His holy places may not be of stone,  
Nor made with hands, yet fairer far than  
aught

By artist feigned or pious ardor reared,  
Fit altars for who guards inviolate  
God's chosen seat, the sacred form of man.  
Doubtless his church will be no hospital

For superannuate forms and mumping  
shams,

No parlor where men issue policies  
Of life-assurance on the Eternal Mind,  
Nor his religion but an ambulance  
To fetch life's wounded and malingerers in,  
Scorned by the strong; yet he, unconscious  
heir

To the influence sweet of Athens and of  
Rome,

And old Judæa's gift of secret fire,  
Spite of himself shall surely learn to know  
And worship some ideal of himself,  
Some divine thing, large-hearted, brotherly,

Not nice in trifles, a soft creditor,  
Pleased with his world, and hating only  
cant.

And, if his Church be doubtful, it is sure  
That, in a world, made for whatever else,  
Not made for mere enjoyment, in a world  
Of toil but half-required, or, at best,  
Paid in some futile currency of breath,  
A world of incompleteness, sorrow swift  
And consolation laggard, whatso'er  
The form of building or the creed professed,

The Cross, bold type of shame to homage  
turned,

Of an unfinished life that sways the world,  
Shall tower as sovereign emblem over all.

The kobold Thought moves with us when  
we shift

Our dwelling to escape him; perched aloft  
On the first load of household-stuff he  
went;

For, where the mind goes, goes old furniture.

I, who to Chartres came to feed my eye  
And give to Fancy one clear holiday,  
Scarce saw the minster for the thoughts it  
stirred

Buzzing o'er past and future with vain  
quest.

Here once there stood a homely wooden  
church,

Which slow devotion nobly changed for  
this

That echoes vaguely to my modern steps.  
By suffrage universal it was built,  
As practised then, for all the country came  
From far as Rouen, to give votes for God,  
Each vote a block of stone securely laid  
Obedient to the master's deep-mused plan.

Will what our ballots rear, responsible  
To no grave forethought, stand so long as  
this?

Delight like this the eye of after days  
Brightening with pride that here, at least,  
were men

Who meant and did the noblest thing they  
knew?

Can our religion cope with deeds like this?  
We, too, build Gothic contract-shams, because

Our deacons have discovered that it pays,  
And pews sell better under vaulted roofs  
Of plaster painted like an Indian squaw.  
Shall not that Western Goth, of whom we  
spoke,

So fiercely practical, so keen of eye,  
Find out, some day, that nothing pays but  
God,

Served whether on the smoke-shut battle-  
field,

In work obscure done honestly, or vote  
For truth unpopular, or faith maintained  
To ruinous convictions, or good deeds  
Wrought for good's sake, mindless of  
heaven or hell?

Shall he not learn that all prosperity,  
Whose bases stretch not deeper than the  
sense,

Is but a trick of this world's atmosphere,  
A desert-born mirage of spire and dome,  
Or find too late, the Past's long lesson  
missed,

That dust the prophets shake from off  
their feet

Grows heavy to drag down both tower and  
wall?

I know not; but, sustained by sure belief  
That man still rises level with the height  
Of noblest opportunities, or makes  
Such, if the time supply not, I can wait.

I gaze round on the windows, pride of  
France,

Each the bright gift of some mechanic  
guild

Who loved their city and thought gold well  
spent

To make her beautiful with piety;  
I pause, transfigured by some stripe of  
bloom,

And my mind throngs with shining auguries,

Circle on circle, bright as seraphim,  
With golden trumpets, silent, that await  
The signal to blow news of good to men.



Then the revulsion came that always comes  
After these dizzy elations of the mind:  
And with a passionate pang of doubt I  
cried,

"O mountain-born, sweet with snow-  
filtered air

From uncontaminated wells of ether drawn  
And never-broken secrecies of sky,  
Freedom, with anguish won, misprized till  
lost,

They keep thee not who from thy sacred  
eyes

Catch the consuming lust of sensual good  
And the brute's license of unfettered will.  
Far from the popular shout and venal  
breath

Of Cleon blowing the mob's baser mind  
To bubbles of wind-piloted conceit,  
Thou shrinkest, gathering up thy skirts, to  
hide

In fortresses of solitary thought  
And private virtue strong in self-restraint.  
Must we too forfeit thee misunderstood,  
Content with names, nor inly wise to know  
That best things perish of their own ex-  
cess,

And quality o'er-driven becomes defect?  
Nay, is it thou indeed that we have  
glimpsed,

Or rather such illusion as of old  
Through Athens glided menadlike and  
Rome,

A shape of vapor, mother of vain dreams  
And mutinous traditions, specious plea  
Of the glaived tyrant and long-memoried  
priest?"

I walked forth saddened; for all thought  
is sad,

And leaves a bitterish savor in the brain,  
Tonic, it may be, not delectable,  
And turned, reluctant, for a parting look  
At those old weather-pitted images  
Of bygone struggle, now so sternly calm.  
About their shoulders sparrows had built  
nests,

And fluttered, chirping, from gray perch  
to perch,

Now on a mitre poising, now a crown,  
Irreverently happy. While I thought  
How confident they were, what careless  
hearts

Flew on those lightsome wings and shared  
the sun,

A larger shadow crossed; and looking up,

I saw where, nesting in the hoary towers,  
The sparrow-hawk slid forth on noiseless  
air,

With sidelong head that watched the joy  
below,

Grim Norman baron o'er this clan of Kelts.  
Enduring Nature, force conservative,  
Indifferent to our noisy whims! Men  
prate

Of all heads to an equal grade cashiered  
On level with the dullest, and expect  
(Sick of no worse distemper than them-  
selves)

A wondrous cure-all in equality;  
They reason that To-morrow must be wise  
Because To-day was not, nor Yesterday,  
As if good days were shapen of themselves,  
Not of the very lifeblood of men's souls;  
Meanwhile, long-suffering, imperturbable,  
Thou quietly complet'st thy syllogism,  
And from the premise sparrow here below  
Draw'st sure conclusion of the hawk above,  
Pleased with the soft-billed songster,  
pleased no less

With the fierce beak of nature's aquiline.

Thou beautiful Old Time, now hid away  
In the Past's valley of Avilion,  
Haply, like Arthur, till thy wound be  
healed,

Then to reclaim the sword and crown  
again!

Thrice beautiful to us; perchance less fair  
To who possessed thee, as a mountain  
seems

To dwellers round its bases but a heap  
Of barren obstacle that lairs the storm  
And the avalanche's silent bolt holds back  
Leashed with a hair,—meanwhile some  
far-off clown,

Hereditary delver of the plain,  
Sees it an unmoved vision of repose,  
Nest of the morning, and conjectures there  
The dance of streams to idle shepherds'  
pipes,

And fairer habitations softly hung  
On breezy slopes, or hid in valleys cool,  
For happier men. No mortal ever dreams  
That the scant isthmus he encamps upon  
Between two oceans, one, the Stormy,  
passed,

And one, the Peaceful, yet to venture on,  
Has been that future whereto prophets  
yearned

For the fulfilment of Earth's cheated hope,

Shall be that past which nerveless poets  
moan  
As the lost opportunity of song.

O Power, more near my life than life itself  
(Or what seems life to us in sense im-  
mured),  
Even as the roots, shut in the darksome  
earth,  
Share in the tree-top's joyance, and con-  
ceive  
Of sunshine and wide air and winged  
things

By sympathy of nature, so do I  
Have evidence of Thee so far above,  
Yet in and of me! Rather Thou the root  
Invisibly sustaining, hid in light,  
Not darkness, or in darkness made by us.  
If sometimes I must hear good men debate  
Of other witness of Thyself than Thou,

As if there needed any help of ours  
To nurse Thy flickering life, that else  
must cease,  
Blown out, as 't were a candle, by men's  
breath,  
My soul shall not be taken in their snare,  
To change her inward surety for their  
doubt  
Muffled from sight in formal robes of  
proof:  
While she can only feel herself through  
Thee,  
I fear not Thy withdrawal; more I fear,  
Seeing, to know Thee not, hoodwinked with  
dreams  
Of signs and wonders, while, unnoticed,  
Thou,  
Walking Thy garden still, commun'st with  
men,  
Missed in the commonplace of miracle.

### THREE MEMORIAL POEMS

"Coscienza fusca  
O della propria o dell' altrui vergogna  
Pur sentirà la tua parola brusca."

If I let fall a word of bitter mirth  
When public shames more shameful pardon won,  
Some have misjudged me, and my service done,  
If small, yet faithful, deemed of little worth:  
Through veins that drew their life from Western earth  
Two hundred years and more my blood hath run  
In no polluted course from sire to son;  
And thus was I predestined ere my birth  
To love the soil wherewith my fibres own  
Instinctive sympathies; yet love it so  
As honor would, nor lightly to dethrone  
Judgment, the stamp of manhood, nor forego  
The son's right to a mother dearer grown  
With growing knowledge and more chaste than snow.

To

E. L. GODKIN,

IN CORDIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS EMINENT SERVICE  
IN HEIGHTENING AND PURIFYING THE TONE  
OF OUR POLITICAL THOUGHT,

*These Three Poems*

ARE DEDICATED.

\*.\* Readers, it is hoped, will remember that, by his Ode at the Harvard Commemoration, the author had precluded himself from many of the natural outlets of thought and feeling common to such occasions as are celebrated in these poems.

## ODE

READ AT THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIGHT AT CONCORD BRIDGE

19TH APRIL, 1875

In the letter to Mr. Thayer quoted in the note introducing the Commemoration Ode, Lowell wrote at some length regarding the structure of his odes in general. He added: "The sentiment of the Concord Ode demanded a larger proportion of lyrical movements, of course, than the others. Harmony, without sacrifice of melody, was what I had mainly in view." He wrote to another friend that the ode was "an improvisation written in the two days before the celebration."

## I

WHO cometh over the hills,  
Her garments with morning sweet,  
The dance of a thousand rills  
Making music before her feet?  
Her presence freshens the air;  
Sunshine steals light from her face;  
The leaden footstep of Care  
Leaps to the tune of her pace,  
Fairness of all that is fair,  
Grace at the heart of all grace,  
Sweetener of hut and of hall,  
Bringer of life out of naught,  
Freedom, oh, fairest of all  
The daughters of Time and Thought!

## II

She cometh, cometh to-day:  
Hark! hear ye not her tread,  
Sending a thrill through your clay,  
Under the sod there, ye dead,  
Her nurslings and champions?  
Do ye not hear, as she comes,  
The bay of the deep-mouthed guns,  
The gathering rôte of the drums?  
The bells that called ye to prayer,  
How wildly they clamor on her,  
Crying, "She cometh! prepare  
Her to praise and her to honor,  
That a hundred years ago  
Scattered here in blood and tears  
Potent seeds wherefrom should grow  
Gladness for a hundred years!"

## III

Tell me, young men, have ye seen  
Creature of diviner mien  
For true hearts to long and cry for,  
Manly hearts to live and die for?  
What hath she that others want?  
Brows that all endearments haunt,  
Eyes that make it sweet to dare,  
Smiles that cheer untimely death,  
Looks that fortify despair,  
Tones more brave than trumpet's breath;  
Tell me, maidens, have ye known  
Household charm more sweetly rare,  
Grace of woman ampler blown,  
Modesty more debonair,  
Younger heart with wit full grown?  
Oh for an hour of my prime,  
The pulse of my hotter years,  
That I might praise her in rhyme  
Would tingle your eyelids to tears,  
Our sweetness, our strength, and our star,  
Our hope, our joy, and our trust,  
Who lifted us out of the dust,  
And made us whatever we are!

## IV

Whiter than moonshine upon snow  
Her raiment is, but round the hem  
Crimson stained; and, as to and fro  
Her sandals flash, we see on them,  
And on her instep veined with blue,  
Flecks of crimson, on those fair feet,  
High-arched, Diana-like, and fleet,  
Fit for no grosser stain than dew:  
Oh, call them rather chrisms than stains,  
Sacred and from heroic veins!  
For, in the glory-guarded pass,  
Her haughty and far-shining head  
She bowed to shrive Leonidas  
With his imperishable dead;  
Her, too, Morgarten saw,  
Where the Swiss lion fleshed his icy paw;  
She followed Cromwell's quenchless star  
Where the grim Puritan tread  
Shook Marston, Naseby, and Dunbar:  
Yea, on her feet are dearer dyes  
Yet fresh, nor looked on with untearful  
eyes.

## V

Our fathers found her in the woods  
Where Nature meditates and broods,  
The seeds of unexampled things

Which Time to consummation brings  
Through life and death and man's unstable  
moods;

They met her here, not recognized,  
A sylvan huntress clothed in furs,  
To whose chaste wants her bow sufficed,  
Nor dreamed what destinies were hers:  
She taught them bee-like to create  
Their simpler forms of Church and State;  
She taught them to endure  
The past with other functions than it knew,  
And turn in channels strange the uncertain  
stream of Fate;  
Better than all, she fenced them in their  
need

With iron-handed Duty's sternest creed,  
'Gainst Self's lean wolf that ravens word  
and deed.

## VI

Why cometh she hither to-day  
To this low village of the plain  
Far from the Present's loud highway,  
From Trade's cool heart and seething brain?  
Why cometh she? She was not far away.  
Since the soul touched it, not in vain,  
With pathos of immortal gain,  
'Tis here her fondest memories stay.  
She loves yon pine-bemurmured ridge  
Where now our broad-browed poet sleeps,  
Dear to both Englands; near him he  
Who wore the ring of Canace;  
But most her heart to rapture leaps  
Where stood that era-parting bridge,  
O'er which, with footfall still as dew,  
The Old Time passed into the New;  
Where, as your stealthy river creeps,  
He whispers to his listening weeds  
Tales of sublimest homespun deeds.  
Here English law and English thought  
'Gainst the self-will of England fought;  
And here were men (coequal with their  
fate),  
Who did great things, unconscious they  
were great.

They dreamed not what a die was cast  
With that first answering shot; what then?  
There was their duty; they were men  
Schooled the soul's inward gospel to obey,  
Though leading to the lion's den.  
They felt the habit-hallowed world give way  
Beneath their lives, and on went they,  
Unhappy who was last.  
When Buttrick gave the word,  
That awful idol of the unchallenged Past,

Strong in their love, and in their lineage  
strong,

Fell crashing: if they heard it not,  
Yet the earth heard,  
Nor ever hath forgot,  
As on from startled throne to throne,  
Where Superstition sate or conscious  
Wrong,  
A shudder ran of some dread birth un-  
known.

Thrice venerable spot!  
River more fateful than the Rubicon!  
O'er those red planks, to snatch her diadem,  
Man's Hope, star-girdled, sprang with them,  
And over ways untried the feet of Doom  
strode on.

## VII

Think you these felt no charms  
In their gray homesteads and embowered  
farms?  
In household faces waiting at the door  
Their evening step should lighten up no  
more?

In fields their boyish feet had known?  
In trees their fathers' hands had set,  
And which with them had grown,  
Widening each year their leafy coronet?  
Felt they no pang of passionate regret  
For those unsold goods that seem so much  
our own?

These things are dear to every man that  
lives,  
And life prized more for what it lends than  
gives.

Yea, many a tie, through iteration sweet,  
Strove to detain their fatal feet;  
And yet the enduring half they chose,  
Whose choice decides a man life's slave or  
king,

The invisible things of God before the seen  
and known:  
Therefore their memory inspiration blows  
With echoes gathering on from zone to  
zone;

For manhood is the one immortal thing  
Beneath Time's changeeful sky,  
And, where it lightened once, from age to  
age,  
Men come to learn, in grateful pilgrimage,  
That length of days is knowing when to die.

## VIII

What marvellous change of things and men!  
She, a world-wandering orphan then,



So mighty now ! Those are her streams  
That whirl the myriad, myriad wheels  
Of all that does, and all that dreams,  
Of all that thinks, and all that feels,  
Through spaces stretched from sea to sea;  
By idle tongues and busy brains,  
By who doth right, and who refrains,  
Hers are our losses and our gains;  
Our maker and our victim she.

## IX

Maiden half mortal, half divine,  
We triumphed in thy coming; to the brinks  
Our hearts were filled with pride's tumultuous wine;  
Better to-day who rather feels than thinks.  
Yet will some graver thoughts intrude,  
And cares of sterner mood;  
They won thee: who shall keep thee ? From the deeps

Where disrowned empires o'er their ruins brood,  
And many a thwarted hope wrings its weak hands and weeps,  
I hear the voice as of a mighty wind  
From all heaven's caverns rushing unconfined,

"I, Freedom, dwell with Knowledge: I abide

With men whom dust of faction cannot blind  
To the slow tracings of the Eternal Mind;  
With men by culture trained and fortified,  
Who bitter duty to sweet lusts prefer,  
Fearless to counsel and obey.

Conscience my sceptre is, and law my sword,

Not to be drawn in passion or in play,  
But terrible to punish and deter;  
Implacable as God's word,  
Like it, a shepherd's crook to them that blindly err.

Your firm-pulsed sires, my martyrs and my saints,

Offshoots of that one stock whose patient sense

Hath known to mingle flux with permanence,

Rated my chaste denials and restraints  
Above the moment's dear-paid paradise:  
Beware lest, shifting with Time's gradual creep,

The light that guided shine into your eyes.  
The envious Powers of ill nor wink nor sleep:

Be therefore timely wise,

Nor laugh when this one steals, and that one lies,  
As if your luck could cheat those sleepless spies,  
Till the deaf Fury comes your house to sweep !"

I hear the voice, and unaffrighted bow;  
Ye shall not be prophetic now,  
Heralds of ill, that darkening fly  
Between my vision and the rainbowed sky,  
Or on the left your hoarse forebodings croak

From many a blasted bough  
On Yggdrasil's storm-sinewed oak,  
That once was green, Hope of the West, as thou:

Yet pardon if I tremble while I boast;  
For I have loved as those who pardon most.

## X

Away, ungrateful doubt, away !

At least she is our own to-day.

Break into rapture, my song,

Verses, leap forth in the sun,

Bearing the joyance along

Like a train of fire as ye run !

Pause not for choosing of words,

Let them but blossom and sing

Blithe as the orchards and birds

With the new coming of spring !

Dance in your jollity, bells;

Shout, cannon; cease not, ye drums;

Answer, ye hillside and dells;

Bow, all ye people ! She comes,

Radiant, calm-fronted, as when

She hallowed that April day.

Stay with us ! Yes, thou shalt stay,

Softener and strengthener of men,

Freedom, not won by the vain,

Not to be courted in play,

Not to be kept without pain.

Stay with us ! Yes, thou wilt stay,

Handmaid and mistress of all,

Kindler of deed and of thought,

Thou that to hut and to hall

Equal deliverance brought !

Souls of her martyrs, draw near,

Touch our dull lips with your fire,

That we may praise without fear

Her our delight, our desire,

Our faith's inextinguishable star,

Our hope, our remembrance, our trust,

Our present, our past, our to be,

Who will mingle her life with our dust

And makes us deserve to be free !

## UNDER THE OLD ELM

POEM READ AT CAMBRIDGE ON THE  
HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF WASH-  
INGTON'S TAKING COMMAND OF THE  
AMERICAN ARMY, 3D JULY, 1775

Lowell was disposed to think this ode the best of these three memorial odes, "mainly because," he says, "it was composed after my college duties were over, though even in that I was distracted by the intervention of the Commencement dinner." Two days after delivering it, he wrote to a friend in another State: "We, too, here in my birthplace, having found out that something happened here a hundred years ago, must have our centennial; and, since my friend and townsman Dr. Holmes could n't be had, I felt bound to do the poetry for the day. We have still standing the elm under which Washington took command of the *American* (till then *provincial*) army, and under which also Whitefield had preached some thirty years before. I took advantage of the occasion to hold out a hand of kindly reconciliation to Virginia. I could do it with the profounder feeling, that no family lost more than mine by the civil war. Three nephews (the hope of our race) were killed in one or other of the Virginia battles, and three cousins on other of those bloody fields." Lowell afterward, when he was in Baltimore giving lectures at Johns Hopkins University, read a part of this poem in public. "I actually drew tears," he wrote, "from the eyes of bitter secessionists — comparable with those iron ones that rattled down Pluto's cheek. I did n't quite like to read the invocation to Virginia here — I was willing enough three or four hundred miles north — but I think it did good."

I

I.

WORDS pass as wind, but where great  
deeds were done

A power abides transfused from sire to  
son:

The boy feels deeper meanings thrill his  
ear,

That tingling through his pulse life-long  
shall run,

With sure impulsion to keep honor clear,  
When, pointing down, his father whispers,

"Here,

Here, where we stand, stood he, the purely  
great,

Whose soul no siren passion could unsphere,  
Then nameless, now a power and mixed  
with fate."

Historic town, thou holdest sacred dust,  
Once known to men as pious, learned, just,  
And one memorial pile that dares to last;  
But Memory greets with reverential kiss  
No spot in all thy circuit sweet as this,  
Touched by that modest glory as it past,  
O'er which yon elm bath piously displayed  
These hundred years its monumental shade.

2.

Of our swift passage through this scenery  
Of life and death, more durable than we,  
What landmark so congenial as a tree  
Repeating its green legend every spring,  
And, with a yearly ring,  
Recording the fair seasons as they flee,  
Type of our brief but still-renewed mortal-  
ity?

We fall as leaves: the immortal trunk re-  
mains,

Built with costly juice of hearts and  
brains

Gone to the mould now, whither all that  
be

Vanish returnless, yet are procreant still  
In human lives to come of good or ill,  
And feed unseen the roots of Destiny.

II

I.

Men's monuments, grown old, forget their  
names

They should eternize, but the place  
Where shining souls have passed imbibes a  
grace

Beyond mere earth; some sweetness of  
their fames

Leaves in the soil its unextinguished trace,  
Pungent, pathetic, sad with nobler aims,  
That penetrates our lives and heightens  
them or shames.

This insubstantial world and fleet  
Seems solid for a moment when we stand  
On dust ennobled by heroic feet  
Once mighty to sustain a tottering land,  
And mighty still such burthen to upbear,  
Nor doomed to tread the path of things  
that merely were:

Our sense, refined with virtue of the spot,  
Across the mists of Lethe's sleepy stream  
Recalls him, the sole chief without a blot,

No more a pallid image and a dream,  
But as he dwelt with men decorously su-  
preme.

2.

Our grosser minds need this terrestrial  
hint  
To raise long-buried days from tombs of  
print:

"Here stood he," softly we repeat,  
And lo, the statue shrined and still  
In that gray minster-front we call the Past,  
Feels in its frozen veins our pulses thrill,  
Breathes living air and mocks at Death's  
deceit.

It warms, it stirs, comes down to us at last,  
Its features human with familiar light,  
A man, beyond the historian's art to kill,  
Or sculptor's to efface with patient chisel-  
blight.

3.

Sure the dumb earth hath memory, nor for  
naught  
Was Fancy given, on whose enchanted  
loom  
Present and Past commingle, fruit and  
bloom  
Of one fair bough, inseparably wrought  
Into the seamless tapestry of thought.  
So charmed, with undeluded eye we see  
In history's fragmentary tale  
Bright clues of continuity,  
Learn that high natures over Time prevail,  
And feel ourselves a link in that entail  
That binds all ages past with all that are  
to be.

III

I.

Beneath our consecrated elm  
A century ago he stood,  
Famed vaguely for that old fight in the  
wood  
Whose red surge sought, but could not  
overwhelm  
The life foredoomed to wield our rough-  
hewn helm:—  
From colleges, where now the gown  
To arms had yielded, from the town,  
Our rude self-summoned levies flocked to  
see  
The new-come chiefs and wonder which  
was he.

No need to question long; close-lipped  
and tall,  
Long trained in murder-brooding forests  
lone  
To bridle others' clamors and his own,  
Firmly erect, he towered above them all,  
The incarnate discipline that was to free  
With iron curb that armed democracy.

2.

A motley rout was that which came to  
stare,  
In raiment tanned by years of sun and  
storm,  
Of every shape that was not uniform,  
Dotted with regimentals here and there;  
An army all of captains, used to pray  
And stiff in fight, but serious drill's despair,  
Skilled to debate their orders, not obey;  
Deacons were there, selectmen, men of  
note  
In half-tamed hamlets ambushed round  
with woods,  
Ready to settle Freewill by a vote,  
But largely liberal to its private moods;  
Prompt to assert by manners, voice, or pen,  
Or ruder arms, their rights as Englishmen,  
Nor much fastidious as to how and when:  
Yet seasoned stuff and fittest to create  
A thought-staid army or a lasting state:  
Haughty they said he was, at first; severe;  
But owned, as all men own, the steady  
hand  
Upon the bridle, patient to command,  
Prized, as all prize, the justice pure from  
fear,  
And learned to honor first, then love him,  
then revere.  
Such power there is in clear-eyed self-  
restraint  
And purpose clean as light from every  
selfish taint.

3.

Musing beneath the legendary tree,  
The years between furl off: I seem to see  
The sun-flecks, shaken the stirred foliage  
through,  
Dapple with gold his sober buff and blue  
And weave prophetic aureoles round the  
head  
That shines our beacon now nor darkens  
with the dead.  
O man of silent mood,  
A stranger among strangers then,

How art thou since renowned the Great,  
 the Good,  
 Familiar as the day in all the homes of  
 men !  
 The winged years, that winnow praise and  
 blame,  
 Blow many names out : they but fan to  
 flame  
 The self-renewing splendors of thy fame.

## IV

## I.

How many subtlest influences unite,  
 With spiritual touch of joy or pain,  
 Invisible as air and soft as light,  
 To body forth that image of the brain  
 We call our Country, visionary shape,  
 Loved more than woman, fuller of fire  
 than wine,  
 Whose charm can none define,  
 Nor any, though he flee it, can escape !  
 All party-colored threads the weaver Time  
 Sets in his web, now trivial, now sublime,  
 All memories, all forebodings, hopes and  
 fears,  
 Mountain and river, forest, prairie, sea,  
 A hill, a rock, a homestead, field, or tree,  
 The casual gleanings of unreckoned years,  
 Take goddess-shape at last and there is  
 She,  
 Old at our birth, new as the springing  
 hours,  
 Shrine of our weakness, fortress of our  
 powers,  
 Consoler, kindler, peerless 'mid her peers,  
 A force that 'neath our conscious being  
 stirs,  
 A life to give ours permanence, when we  
 Are borne to mingle our poor earth with  
 hers,  
 And all this glowing world goes with us on  
 our biers.

## 2.

Nations are long results, by ruder ways  
 Gathering the might that warrants length  
 of days;  
 They may be pieced of half-reluctant  
 shares  
 Welded by hammer-strokes of broad-  
 brained kings,  
 Or from a doughty people grow, the heirs  
 Of wise traditions widening cautious rings;  
 At best they are computable things,

A strength behind us making us feel bold  
 In right, or, as may chance, in wrong;  
 Whose force by figures may be summed  
 and told,  
 So many soldiers, ships, and dollars strong,  
 And we but drops that bear compulsory  
 part  
 In the dumb throb of a mechanic heart;  
 But Country is a shape of each man's  
 mind  
 Sacred from definition, unconfined  
 By the cramped walls where daily drudger-  
 ies grind;  
 An inward vision, yet an outward birth  
 Of sweet familiar heaven and earth;  
 A brooding Presence that stirs motions  
 blind  
 Of wings within our embryo being's shell  
 That wait but her completer spell  
 To make us eagle-natured, fit to dare  
 Life's nobler spaces and untarnished air.

## 3.

You, who hold dear this self-conceived  
 ideal,  
 Whose faith and works alone can make it  
 real,  
 Bring all your fairest gifts to deck her  
 shrine  
 Who lifts our lives away from Thine and  
 Mine  
 And feeds the lamp of manhood more di-  
 vine  
 With fragrant oils of quenchless constancy.  
 When all have done their utmost, surely he  
 Hath given the best who gives a character  
 Erect and constant, which nor any shock  
 Of loosened elements, nor the forceful sea  
 Of flowing or of ebbing fates, can stir  
 From its deep bases in the living rock  
 Of ancient manhood's sweet security :  
 And this he gave, serenely far from pride  
 As baseness, boon with prosperous stars  
 allied,  
 Part of what nobler seed shall in our loins  
 abide.

## 4.

No bond of men as common pride so  
 strong,  
 In names time-filtered for the lips of song,  
 Still operant, with the primal Forces bound  
 Whose currents, on their spiritual round,  
 Transfuse our mortal will nor are gain-  
 said :



These are their arsenals, these the exhaust-  
less mines  
That give a constant heart in great de-  
signs ;  
These are the stuff whereof such dreams  
are made  
As make heroic men : thus surely he  
Still holds in place the massy blocks he  
laid  
'Neath our new frame, enforcing soberly  
The self-control that makes and keeps a  
people free.

v

I.

Oh, for a drop of that Cornelian ink  
Which gave Agricola dateless length of  
days,  
To celebrate him fitly, neither swerve  
To phrase unkempt, nor pass discretion's  
brink,  
With him so statue-like in sad reserve,  
So diffident to claim, so forward to de-  
serve !  
Nor need I shun due influence of his fame  
Who, mortal among mortals, seemed as  
now  
The equestrian shape with unimpassioned  
brow,  
That paces silent on through vistas of ac-  
claim.

2.

What figure more immovably august  
Than that grave strength so patient and so  
pure,  
Calm in good fortune, when it wavered,  
sure,  
That mind serene, impenetrably just,  
Modelled on classic lines so simple they  
endure ?  
That soul so softly radiant and so white  
The track it left seems less of fire than  
light,  
Cold but to such as love distemperature ?  
And if pure light, as some deem, be the  
force  
That drives rejoicing planets on their  
course,  
Why for his power benign seek an impurer  
source ?  
His was the true enthusiasm that burns  
long,  
Domestically bright,

Fed from itself and shy of human sight,  
The hidden force that makes a lifetime  
strong,  
And not the short-lived fuel of a song.  
Passionless, say you ? What is passion  
for  
But to sublime our natures and control  
To front heroic toils with late return,  
Or none, or such as shames the conqueror ?  
That fire was fed with substance of the  
soul  
And not with holiday stubble, that could  
burn,  
Unpraised of men who after bonfires run,  
Through seven slow years of unadvancing  
war,  
Equal when fields were lost or fields were  
won,  
With breath of popular applause or blame,  
Nor fanned nor damped, unquenchably the  
same,  
Too inward to be reached by flaws of idle  
fame.

3.

Soldier and statesman, rarest unison ;  
High-poised example of great duties done  
Simply as breathing, a world's honors worn  
As life's indifferent gifts to all men born ;  
Dumb for himself, unless it were to God,  
But for his barefoot soldiers eloquent,  
Tramping the snow to coral where they  
trod,  
Held by his awe in hollow-eyed content ;  
Modest, yet firm as Nature's self ; un-  
blamed  
Save by the men his nobler temper  
shamed ;  
Never seduced through show of present  
good  
By other than unsetting lights to steer  
New-trimmed in Heaven, nor than his  
steadfast mood  
More steadfast, far from rashness as from  
fear ;  
Rigid, but with himself first, grasping still  
In swerveless poise the wave-beat helm of  
will ;  
Not honored then or now because he wooed  
The popular voice, but that he still with-  
stood ;  
Broad-minded, higher-souled, there is but  
one  
Who was all this and ours, and all men's,  
— WASHINGTON.

4.

Minds strong by fits, irregularly great,  
That flash and darken like revolving lights,  
Catch more the vulgar eye unschooled to wait

On the long curve of patient days and nights

Rounding a whole life to the circle fair  
Of orb'd fulfilment; and this balanced soul,

So simple in its grandeur, coldly bare  
Of draperies theatric, standing there  
In perfect symmetry of self-control,  
Seems not so great at first, but greater grows

Still as we look, and by experience learn  
How grand this quiet is, how nobly stern  
The discipline that wrought through life-long throes

That energetic passion of repose.

5.

A nature too decorous and severe,  
Too self-respectful in its griefs and joys,  
For ardent girls and boys  
Who find no genius in a mind so clear  
That its grave depths seem obvious and near,

Nor a soul great that made so little noise.  
They feel no force in that calm-cadenced phrase,

The habitual full-dress of his well-bred mind,

That seems to pace the minuet's courtly maze

And tell of ampler leisures, roomier length of days.

His firm-based brain, to self so little kind  
That no tumultuary blood could blind,  
Formed to control men, not amaze,  
Looms not like those that borrow height of haze:

It was a world of statelier movement then  
Than this we fret in, he a denizen  
Of that ideal Rome that made a man for men.

VI

I.

The longer on this earth we live  
And weigh the various qualities of men,  
Seeing how most are fugitive,  
Or fitful gifts, at best, of now and then,

Wind-wavered corpse-lights, daughters of the fen,

The more we feel the high stern-featured beauty

Of plain devotedness to duty,  
Steadfast and still, nor paid with mortal praise,

But finding amplest recompense  
For life's ungarlanded expense  
In work done squarely and unwasted days.  
For this we honor him, that he could know  
How sweet the service and how free  
Of her, God's eldest daughter here below,  
And choose in meanest raiment which was she.

2.

Placid completeness, life without a fall  
From faith or highest aims, truth's breachless wall,

Surely if any fame can bear the touch,  
His will say "Here!" at the last trumpet's call,

The unexpressive man whose life expressed so much.

VII

I.

Never to see a nation born  
Hath been given to mortal man,  
Unless to those who, on that summer morn,  
Gazed silent when the great Virginian  
Unsheathed the sword whose fatal flash  
Shot union through the incoherent clash  
Of our loose atoms, crystallizing them  
Around a single will's unpliant stem,  
And making purpose of emotion rash.  
Out of that scabbard sprang, as from its womb,

Nebulous at first but hardening to a star,  
Through mutual share of sunburst and of gloom,

The common faith that made us what we are.

2.

That lifted blade transformed our jangling clans,

Till then provincial, to Americans,  
And made a unity of wilydering plans;  
Here was the doom fixed: here is marked the date

When this New World awoke to man's estate,

Burnt its last ship and ceased to look behind:

Nor thoughtless was the choice; no love or hate

Could from its poise move that deliberate mind,

Weighing between too early and too late  
Those pitfalls of the man refused by Fate:

His was the impartial vision of the great  
Who see not as they wish, but as they find.

He saw the dangers of defeat, nor less  
The incomputable perils of success;

The sacred past thrown by, an empty rind;  
The future, cloud-land, snare of prophets blind;

The waste of war, the ignominy of peace;  
On either hand a sullen rear of woes,

Whose garnered lightnings none could guess,

Piling its thunder-heads and muttering  
"Cease!"

Yet drew not back his hand, but gravely chose

The seeming-desperate task whence our  
new nation rose.

3.

A noble choice and of immortal seed!  
Nor deem that acts heroic wait on chance

Or easy were as in a boy's romance;  
The man's whole life preludes the single deed

That shall decide if his inheritance  
Be with the sifted few of matchless breed,

Our race's sap and sustenance,  
Or with the unmotivated herd that only sleep

and feed.

Choice seems a thing indifferent; thus or so,  
What matters it? The Fates with mock-

ing face.

Look on inexorable, nor seem to know  
Where the lot lurks that gives life's fore-

most place.

Yet Duty's leaden casket holds it still,  
And but two ways are offered to our will,

Toil with rare triumph, ease with safe dis-

grace,

The problem still for us and all of human  
race.

He chose, as men choose, where most dan-

ger showed,  
Nor ever faltered 'neath the load  
Of petty cares, that gall great hearts the  
most,

But kept right on the strenuous up-hill road,

Strong to the end, above complaint or boast:  
The popular tempest on his rock-mailed

coast

Wasted its wind-borne spray,  
The noisy marvel of a day;

His soul sate still in its unstormed abode.

VIII

Virginia gave us this imperial man  
Cast in the massive mould

Of those high-statured ages old  
Which into grander forms our mortal metal

ran;

She gave us this unblemished gentleman:  
What shall we give her back but love and

praise

As in the dear old unestrang'd days  
Before the inevitable wrong began?

Mother of States and undiminished men,  
Thou gavest us a country, giving him,

And we owe alway what we owed thee then:  
The boon thou wouldst have snatched from

us agen

Shines as before with no abatement dim.  
A great man's memory is the only thing

With influence to outlast the present whim  
And bind us as when here he knit our

golden ring.

All of him that was subject to the hours  
Lies in thy soil and makes it part of ours:

Across more recent graves,  
Where unresentful Nature waves

Her pennons o'er the shot-ploughed sod,  
Proclaiming the sweet Truce of God,

We from this consecrated plain stretch out  
Our hands as free from afterthought or

doubt

As here the united North  
Poured her embrown'd manhood forth

In welcome of our savior and thy son.  
Through battle we have better learned thy

worth,

The long-breathed valor and undaunted  
will,

Which, like his own, the day's disaster  
done,

Could, safe in manhood, suffer and be still.  
Both thine and ours the victory hardly

won;

If ever with distempered voice or pen  
We have misdeemed thee, here we take it

back,  
And for the dead of both don common  
black.

Be to us evermore as thou wast then,

As we forget thou hast not always been,  
Mother of States and unpolluted men,  
Virginia, fitly named from England's manly  
queen!

## AN ODE

FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1876

I

I.

ENTRANCED I saw a vision in the cloud  
That loitered dreaming in yon sunset sky,  
Full of fair shapes, half creatures of the  
eye,

Half chance-evoked by the wind's fantasy  
In golden mist, an ever-shifting crowd:  
There, 'mid unreal forms that came and  
went

In air-spun robes, of evanescent dye,  
A woman's semblance shone preëminent;  
Not armed like Pallas, not like Hera proud,  
But, as on household diligence intent,  
Beside her visionary wheel she bent  
Like Aretë or Bertha, nor than they  
Less queenly in her port: about her knee  
Glad children clustered confident in play:  
Placid her pose, the calm of energy;  
And over her broad brow in many a round  
(That loosened would have gilt her gar-  
ment's hem),

Succinct, as toil prescribes, the hair was  
wound

In lustrous coils, a natural diadem.  
The cloud changed shape, obsequious to the  
whim

Of some transmuting influence felt in me,  
And, looking now, a wolf I seemed to see  
Limned in that vapor, gaunt and hunger-  
bold,

Threatening her charge: resolve in every  
limb,

Erect she flamed in mail of sun-wove gold,  
Penthesilea's self for battle dight;  
One arm uplifted braced a flickering spear,  
And one her adamant shield made light;  
Her face, helm-shadowed, grew a thing to  
fear,

And her fierce eyes, by danger challenged,  
took

Her trident-sceptred mother's dauntless  
look.

"I know thee now, O goddess-born!" I  
cried,

And turned with loftier brow and firmer  
stride;

For in that spectral cloud-work I had seen  
Her image, bodied forth by love and pride,  
The fearless, the benign, the mother-eyed,  
The fairer world's toil-consecrated queen.

2.

What shape by exile dreamed elates the  
mind

Like hers whose hand, a fortress of the  
poor,

No blood in vengeance spilt, though lawful,  
stains?

Who never turned a suppliant from her  
door?

Whose conquests are the gains of all man-  
kind?

To-day her thanks shall fly on every wind,  
Unstinted, unrebuked, from shore to shore,  
One love, one hope, and not a doubt behind!  
Cannon to cannon shall repeat her praise,  
Banner to banner flap it forth in flame;  
Her children shall rise up to bless her  
name,

And wish her harmless length of days,  
The mighty mother of a mighty brood,  
Blessed in all tongues and dear to every  
blood,

The beautiful, the strong, and, best of all,  
the good.

3.

Seven years long was the bow  
Of battle bent, and the heightening  
Storm-heaps convulsed with the throe  
Of their uncontrollable lightning;  
Seven years long heard the sea  
Crash of navies and wave-borne thunder;  
Then drifted the cloud-rack a-lee,  
And new stars were seen, a world's won-  
der;

Each by her sisters made bright,  
All binding all to their stations,  
Cluster of manifold light  
Startling the old constellations:  
Men looked up and grew pale:  
Was it a comet or star,  
Omen of blessing or bale,  
Hung o'er the ocean afar?

4.

Stormy the day of her birth:  
Was she not born of the strong,  
She, the last ripeness of earth,



Beautiful, prophesied long?  
 Stormy the days of her prime:  
 Hers are the pulses that beat  
 Higher for perils sublime,  
 Making them fawn at her feet.  
 Was she not born of the strong?  
 Was she not born of the wise?  
 Daring and counsel belong  
 Of right to her confident eyes:  
 Human and motherly they,  
 Careless of station or race:  
 Harken! her children to-day  
 Shout for the joy of her face.

## II

## I.

No praises of the past are hers,  
 No fanes by hallowing time caressed,  
 No broken arch that ministers  
 To Time's sad instinct in the breast:  
 She has not gathered from the years  
 Grandeur of tragedies and tears,  
 Nor from long leisure the unrest  
 That finds repose in forms of classic grace:  
 These may delight the coming race  
 Who haply shall not count it to our crime  
 That we who fain would sing are here  
 before our time.

She also hath her monuments;  
 Not such as stand decrepitably resigned  
 To ruin-mark the path of dead events  
 That left no seed of better days behind,  
 The tourist's pensioners that show their  
 scars

And maunder of forgotten wars;  
 She builds not on the ground, but in the  
 mind,

Her open-hearted palaces  
 For larger-thoughted men with heaven and  
 earth at ease:

Her march the plump mow marks, the  
 sleepless wheel,  
 The golden sheaf, the self-swayed com-  
 monweal;

The happy homesteads hid in orchard  
 trees

Whose sacrificial smokes through peaceful  
 air

Rise lost in heaven, the household's silent  
 prayer;

What architect hath bettered these?

With softened eye the westward traveller  
 sees

A thousand miles of neighbors side by side,

Holding by toil-won titles fresh from God  
 The lands no serf or seigneur ever trod,  
 With manhood latent in the very sod,  
 Where the long billow of the wheatfield's  
 tide

Flows to the sky across the prairie wide,  
 A sweeter vision than the castled Rhine,  
 Kindly with thoughts of Ruth and Bible-  
 days benign.

## 2.

O ancient commonwealths, that we revere  
 Haply because we could not know you  
 near,

Your deeds like statues down the aisles of  
 Time

Shine peerless in memorial calm sublime,  
 And Athens is a trumpet still, and Rome;  
 Yet which of your achievements is not foam  
 Weighed with this one of hers (below you  
 far

In fame, and born beneath a milder star),  
 That to Earth's orphans, far as curves the  
 dome

Of death-deaf sky, the bounteous West  
 means home,

With dear precedency of natural ties  
 That stretch from roof to roof and make  
 men gently wise?

And if the nobler passions wane,  
 Distorted to base use, if the near goal  
 Of insubstantial gain

Tempt from the proper race-course of the  
 soul

That crowns their patient breath  
 Whose feet, song-sandalled, are too fleet  
 for Death,

Yet may she claim one privilege urbane  
 And haply first upon the civic roll,  
 That none can breathe her air nor grow  
 humane.

## 3.

Oh, better far the briefest hour  
 Of Athens self-consumed, whose plastic  
 power

Hid Beauty safe from Death in words or  
 stone;

Of Rome, fair quarry where those eagles  
 crowd

Whose fulgurous vans about the world had  
 blown

Triumphant storm and seeds of polity;  
 Of Venice, fading o'er her shipless sea,  
 Last iridescence of a sunset cloud;

Than this inert prosperity,  
 This bovine comfort in the sense alone !  
 Yet art came slowly even to such as those,  
 Whom no past genius cheated of their own  
 With prudence of o'er-mastering precedent;  
 Petal by petal spreads the perfect rose,  
 Secure of the divine event;  
 And only children rend the bud half-blown  
 To forestall Nature in her calm intent:  
 Time hath a quiver full of purposes  
 Which miss not of their aim, to us un-  
     known,  
 And brings about the impossible with ease:  
 Haply for us the ideal dawn shall break  
 From where in legend-tinted line  
 The peaks of Hellas drink the morning's  
     wine,  
 To tremble on our lids with mystic sign  
 Till the drowsed ichor in our veins awake  
 And set our pulse in tune with moods  
     divine:  
 Long the day lingered in its sea-fringed  
     nest,  
 Then touched the Tuscan hills with golden  
     lance  
 And paused; then on to Spain and France  
 The splendor flew, and Albion's misty  
     crest:  
 Shall Ocean bar him from his destined  
     West ?  
 Or are we, then, arrived too late,  
 Doomed with the rest to grope disconsolate,  
 Foreclosed of Beauty by our modern date ?

## III

## I.

Poets, as their heads grow gray,  
 Look from too far behind the eyes,  
 Too long-experienced to be wise  
 In guileless youth's diviner way;  
 Life sings not now, but prophesies;  
 Time's shadows they no more behold,  
 But, under them, the riddle old  
 That mocks, bewilders, and defies:  
 In childhood's face the seed of shame,  
 In the green tree an ambushed flame,  
 In Phosphor a vaunt-guard of Night,  
 They, though against their will, divine,  
 And dread the care-dispelling wine  
 Stored from the Muse's vintage bright,  
 By age imbued with second-sight.  
 From Faith's own eyelids there peeps out,  
 Even as they look, the leer of doubt;  
 The festal wreath their fancy loads

With care that whispers and forebodes:  
 Nor this our triumph-day can blunt Me-  
     gæra's goads.

## 2.

Murmur of many voices in the air  
 Denounces us degenerate,  
 Unfaithful guardians of a noble fate,  
 And prompts indifference or despair:  
 Is this the country that we dreamed in  
     youth,  
 Where wisdom and not numbers should  
     have weight,  
 Seed-field of simpler manners, braver truth,  
 Where shams should cease to dominate  
 In household, church, and state ?  
 Is this Atlantis ? This the unpoisoned soil,  
 Sea-whelmed for ages and recovered late,  
 Where parasitic greed no more should coil  
 Round Freedom's stem to bend awry and  
     blight  
 What grew so fair, sole plant of love and  
     light ?  
 Who sit where once in crowned seclusion sate  
 The long-proved athletes of debate  
 Trained from their youth, as none thinks  
     needful now ?  
 Is this debating club where boys dispute,  
 And wrangle o'er their stolen fruit,  
 The Senate, erewhile cloister of the few,  
 Where Clay once flashed and Webster's  
     cloudy brow  
 Brooded those bolts of thought that all the  
     horizon knew ?

## 3.

Oh, as this pensive moonlight blurs my  
     pines,  
 Here while I sit and meditate these lines,  
 To gray-green dreams of what they are by  
     day,  
 So would some light, not reason's sharp-  
     edged ray,  
 Trance me in moonshine as before the  
     flight  
 Of years had won me this unwelcome right  
 To see things as they are, or shall be soon,  
 In the frank prose of undissembling noon !

## 4.

Back to my breast, ungrateful sigh !  
 Whoever fails, whoever errs,  
 The penalty be ours, not hers !  
 The present still seems vulgar, seen too  
     nigh;

The golden age is still the age that 's past:  
I ask no drowsy opiate  
To dull my vision of that only state  
Founded on faith in man, and therefore  
sure to last.

For, O my country, touched by thee,  
The gray hairs gather back their gold;  
Thy thought sets all my pulses free;  
The heart refuses to be old;  
The love is all that I can see.  
Not to thy natal-day belong  
Time's prudent doubt or age's wrong,  
But gifts of gratitude and song:  
Unsummoned crowd the thankful words,  
As sap in spring-time floods the tree,  
Foreboding the return of birds,  
For all that thou hast been to me !

## IV

## I.

Flawless his heart and tempered to the  
core  
Who, beckoned by the forward-leaning  
wave,  
First left behind him the firm-footed shore,  
And, urged by every nerve of sail and  
oar,  
Steered for the Unknown which gods to  
mortals gave,  
Of thought and action the mysterious door,  
Bugbear of fools, a summons to the brave:  
Strength found he in the unsympathizing  
sun,  
And strange stars from beneath the horizon  
won,  
And the dumb ocean pitilessly grave:  
High-hearted surely he;  
But bolder they who first off-cast  
Their moorings from the habitable Past  
And ventured chartless on the sea  
Of storm-engendering Liberty:  
For all earth's width of waters is a span,  
And their convulsed existence mere repose,  
Matched with the unstable heart of man,  
Shoreless in wants, mist-girt in all it  
knows,  
Open to every wind of sect or clan,  
And sudden-passionate in ebbs and flows.

## 2.

They steered by stars the elder shipmen  
knew,  
And laid their courses where the currents  
draw

Of ancient wisdom channelled deep in law,  
The undaunted few  
Who changed the Old World for the New,  
And more devoutly prized  
Than all perfection theorized  
The more imperfect that had roots and  
grew.

They founded deep and well,  
Those danger-chosen chiefs of men  
Who still believed in Heaven and Hell,  
Nor hoped to find a spell,  
In some fine flourish of a pen,  
To make a better man  
Than long-considering Nature will or can,  
Secure against his own mistakes,  
Content with what life gives or takes,  
And acting still on some fore-ordered plan,  
A cog of iron in an iron wheel,  
Too nicely poised to think or feel,  
Dumb motor in a clock-like commonweal.  
They wasted not their brain in schemes  
Of what man might be in some bubble-  
sphere,

As if he must be other than he seems  
Because he was not what he should be  
here,

Postponing Time's slow proof to petulant  
dreams:

Yet herein they were great  
Beyond the incredulous lawgivers of yore,  
And wiser than the wisdom of the shelf,  
That they conceived a deeper-rooted state,  
Of harder growth, alive from rind to core,  
By making man sole sponsor of himself.

## 3.

God of our fathers, Thou who wast,  
Art, and shalt be when those eye-wise who  
flout

Thy secret presence shall be lost  
In the great light that dazzles them to  
doubt,

We, sprung from loins of stalwart men  
Whose strength was in their trust  
That Thou wouldst make thy dwelling in  
their dust

And walk with those a fellow-citizen  
Who build a city of the just,  
We, who believe Life's bases rest  
Beyond the probe of chemic test,  
Still, like our fathers, feel Thee near,  
Sure that, while lasts the immutable de-  
cree,

The land to Human Nature dear  
Shall not be unbeloved of Thee.

## HEARTSEASE AND RUE

THIS title was given to the volume of poems collected and published in 1886 after Lowell's return to private life. He took occasion to

glean after his earlier harvest and preserved in it several poems written before the publication of *Under the Willows*.

## I. FRIENDSHIP

## AGASSIZ

Come  
Dicesti *egli ebbe?* non viv' egli ancora?  
Non fiero gli occhi suoi lo dolce lome?

Lowell was in Florence when Agassiz died, and sent this poem home to Mr. Norton for publication. "His death," he says, "came home to me in a singular way, growing into my consciousness from day to day as if it were a graft new-set, that by degrees became part of my own wood and drew a greater share of my sap than belonged to it, as grafts sometimes will. I suppose that, unconsciously to myself, a great part of the ferment it produced in me was owing to the deaths of my sister Anna [Mrs. Charles R. Lowell], of Mrs. —, whom I knew as a child in my early manhood, and of my cousin Amory, who was inextricably bound up with the primal associations of my life, associations which always have a singular sweetness for me. A very deep chord had been touched also at Florence by the sight of our old lodgings in the Casa Guidi, of the balcony Mabel used to run on, and the windows we used to look out at so long ago. I got sometimes into the mood I used to be in when I was always repeating to myself,

'King Pandion he is dead;  
All *thy* friends are lapt in lead,'—

verses which seem to me desolately pathetic. At last I began to hum over bits of my poem in my head till it took complete possession of me and worked me up to a delicious state of excitement, all the more delicious as my brain (or at any rate the musical part of it) had been lying dormant so long. My old trick of seeing things with my eyes shut after I had gone to bed (I mean whimsical things utterly alien to the train of my thoughts—for example, a hospital ward with a long row of white, untenanted beds, and on the farthest a pile of those little wooden dolls with red-painted slippers) revived in full force. Nervous, horribly nervous, but happy for the first time (I mean consciously happy) since I

came over here. And so by degrees my poem worked itself out. The parts came to me as I came awake, and I wrote them down in the morning. I had all my bricks—but the mortar would n't *set*, as the masons say. However, I got it into order at last. You will see there is a logical sequence if you look sharp. It was curious to me after it was done to see how fleshly it was. This impression of Agassiz had wormed itself into my consciousness, and without my knowing it had colored my whole poem. I could not help feeling how, if I had been writing of Emerson, for example, I should have been quite otherwise ideal. But there it is, and you can judge for yourself. I think there is some go in it somehow, but it is too near me yet to be judged fairly by me. It is old-fashioned, you see, but none the worse for that." The poem was dated February, 1874.

I

I.

THE electric nerve, whose instantaneous thrill

Makes next-door gossips of the antipodes,  
Confutes poor Hope's last fallacy of ease,—  
The distance that divided her from ill:

Earth sentient seems again as when of old

The horny foot of Pan  
Stamped, and the conscious horror ran  
Beneath men's feet through all her fibres  
cold:

Space's blue walls are mined; we feel the throe

From underground of our night-mantled foe:

The flame-winged feet  
Of Trade's new Mercury, that dry-shod run  
Through briny abysses dreamless of the sun,

Are mercilessly fleet,  
And at a bound annihilate  
Ocean's prerogative of short reprieve;  
Surely ill news might wait,  
And man be patient of delay to grieve:  
Letters have sympathies  
And tell-tale faces that reveal,



To senses finer than the eyes,  
 Their errand's purport ere we break the  
 seal;  
 They wind a sorrow round with circum-  
 stance  
 To stay its feet, nor all unwarned displace  
 The veil that darkened from our sidelong  
 glance

The inexorable face:  
 But now Fate stuns as with a mace;  
 The savage of the skies, that men have  
 caught  
 And some scant use of language  
 taught,

Tells only what he must, —  
 The steel-cold fact in one laconic thrust.

## 2.

So thought I, as, with vague, mechanic  
 eyes,  
 I scanned the festering news we half de-  
 spise

Yet scramble for no less,  
 And read of public scandal, private fraud,  
 Crime flaunting scot-free while the mob  
 applaud,  
 Office made vile to bribe unworthiness,  
 And all the unwholesome mess  
 The Land of Honest Abraham serves of  
 late

To teach the Old World how to wait,  
 When suddenly,  
 As happens if the brain, from overweight  
 Of blood, infect the eye,  
 Three tiny words grew lurid as I read,  
 And reeled commingling: *Agassiz is dead.*  
 As when, beneath the street's familiar jar,  
 An earthquake's alien omen rumbles far,  
 Men listen and forebode, I hung my head,  
 And strove the present to recall,  
 As if the blow that stunned were yet to  
 fall.

## 3.

Uprooted is our mountain oak,  
 That promised long security of shade  
 And brooding-place for many a winged  
 thought;

Not by Time's softly-cadenced stroke  
 With pauses of relenting pity stayed,  
 But ere a root seemed sapt, a bough de-  
 cayed,  
 From sudden ambush by the whirlwind  
 caught  
 And in his broad maturity betrayed !

## 4.

Well might I, as of old, appeal to you,  
 O mountains woods and streams,  
 To help us mourn him, for ye loved him  
 too;

But simpler moods befit our modern  
 themes,  
 And no less perfect birth of nature can,  
 Though they yearn tow'rd him, sympathize  
 with man,  
 Save as dumb fellow-prisoners through a  
 wall;

Answer ye rather to my call,  
 Strong poets of a more unconscious day,  
 When Nature spake nor sought nice rea-  
 sons why,

Too much for softer arts forgotten since  
 That teach our forthright tongue to lisp  
 and mince,

And drown in music the heart's bitter cry !  
 Lead me some steps in your directer way,  
 Teach me those words that strike a solid  
 root

Within the ears of men;  
 Ye chiefly, virile both to think and feel,  
 Deep-chested Chapman and firm-footed  
 Ben,

For he was masculine from head to heel.  
 Nay, let himself stand undiminished by  
 With those clear parts of him that will not  
 die.

Himself from out the recent dark I claim  
 To hear, and, if I flatter him, to blame;  
 To show himself, as still I seem to see,  
 A mortal, built upon the antique plan,  
 Brimful of lusty blood as ever ran,  
 And taking life as simply as a tree !  
 To claim my foiled good-by let him ap-  
 pear,

Large-limbed and human as I saw him  
 near,  
 Loosed from the stiffening uniform of  
 fame:

And let me treat him largely: I should  
 fear,

(If with too prying lens I chanced to err,  
 Mistaking catalogue for character,) His wise forefinger raised in smiling blame.  
 Nor would I scant him with judicial  
 breath

And turn mere critic in an epitaph;  
 I choose the wheat, incurious of the chaff  
 That swells fame living, chokes it after  
 death,

And would but memorize the shining half  
 Of his large nature that was turned to me:  
 Fain had I joined with those that honored  
     him  
 With eyes that darkened because his were  
     dim,  
 And now been silent: but it might not be.

## II

## I.

In some the genius is a thing apart,  
     A pillared hermit of the brain,  
 Hoarding with incommunicable art  
     Its intellectual gain;  
     Man's web of circumstance and fate  
     They from their perch of self observe,  
 Indifferent as the figures on a slate  
     Are to the planet's sun-swung curve  
     Whose bright returns they calculate;  
     Their nice adjustment, part to part,  
 Were shaken from its serviceable mood  
 By unpremeditated stirs of heart  
     Or jar of human neighborhood:  
 Some find their natural selves, and only  
     then,  
 In furloughs of divine escape from men,  
 And when, by that brief ecstasy left bare,  
     Driven by some instinct of desire,  
 They wander worldward, 't is to blink and  
     stare,  
 Like wild things of the wood about a fire,  
 Dazed by the social glow they cannot  
     share;  
     His nature brooked no lonely lair,  
 But basked and bourgeoned in copartnery,  
 Companionship, and open-windowed glee:  
     He knew, for he had tried,  
     Those speculative heights that lure  
 The unpractised foot, impatient of a guide,  
     Tow'rd ether too attenuately pure  
 For sweet unconscious breath, though dear  
     to pride,  
 But better loved the foothold sure  
 Of paths that wind by old abodes of men  
 Who hope at last the churchyard's peace  
     secure,  
 And follow time-worn rules, that them  
     suffice,  
 Learned from their sires, traditionally wise,  
 Careful of honest custom's how and when;  
 His mind, too brave to look on Truth  
     askance,  
 No more those habitudes of faith could  
     share,

But, tinged with sweetness of the old Swiss  
     manse,  
 Lingered around them still and fain would  
     spare.

Patient to spy a sullen egg for weeks,  
 The enigma of creation to surprise,  
 His truer instinct sought the life that  
     speaks

Without a mystery from kindly eyes;  
 In no self-spun cocoon of prudence wound,  
 He by the touch of men was best inspired,  
 And caught his native greatness at re-  
     bound

From generousities itself had fired;  
 Then how the heat through every fibre ran,  
 Felt in the gathering presence of the man,  
 While the apt word and gesture came un-  
     bid!

Virtues and faults it to one metal wrought,  
     Fined all his blood to thought,  
 And ran the molten man in all he said or  
     did.

All Tully's rules and all Quintilian's too  
 He by the light of listening faces knew,  
 And his rapt audience all unconscious lent  
 Their own roused force to make him elo-  
     quent;

Persuasion fondled in his look and tone;  
 Our speech (with strangers prudish) he  
     could bring

To find new charm in accents not her own;  
 Her coy constraints and icy hindrances  
 Melted upon his lips to natural ease,  
 As a brook's fetters swell the dance of  
     spring.

Nor yet all sweetness: not in vain he wore,  
 Nor in the sheath of ceremony, controlled  
 By velvet courtesy or caution cold,  
 That sword of honest anger prized of old,

    But, with two-handed wrath,  
 If baseness or pretension crossed his path,  
     Struck once nor needed to strike more.

## 2.

His magic was not far to seek, —  
 He was so human! Whether strong or  
     weak,  
 Far from his kind he neither sank nor  
     soared,

But sate an equal guest at every board:  
 No beggar ever felt him condescend,  
 No prince presume; for still himself he  
     bare

At manhood's simple level, and where'er  
 He met a stranger, there he left a friend.

How large an aspect! nobly unsevere,  
 With freshness round him of Olympian  
 cheer,  
 Like visits of those earthly gods he came;  
 His look, wherever its good-fortune fell,  
 Doubled the feast without a miracle,  
 And on the hearthstone danced a happier  
 flame;  
 Philemon's crabbed vintage grew benign;  
 Amphitryon's gold-juice humanized to wine.

## III

## I.

The garrulous memories  
 Gather again from all their far-flown  
 nooks,  
 Singly at first, and then by twos and threes,  
 Then in a throng innumerable, as the rooks  
 Thicken their twilight files  
 Tow'rd Tintern's gray repose of roofless  
 aisles:  
 Once more I see him at the table's head  
 When Saturday her monthly banquet  
 spread  
 To scholars, poets, wits,  
 All choice, some famous, loving things, not  
 names,  
 And so without a twinge at others' fames;  
 Such company as wisest moods befits,  
 Yet with no pedant blindness to the worth  
 Of undeliberate mirth,  
 Natures benignly mixed of air and earth,  
 Now with the stars and now with equal zest  
 Tracing the eccentric orbit of a jest.

## 2.

I see in vision the warm-lighted hall,  
 The living and the dead I see again,  
 And but my chair is empty; 'mid them  
 all  
 'T is I that seem the dead: they all remain  
 Immortal, changeless creatures of the brain:  
 Wellnigh I doubt which world is real most,  
 Of sense or spirit, to the truly sane;  
 In this abstraction it were light to deem  
 Myself the figment of some stronger  
 dream;  
 They are the real things, and I the ghost  
 That glide unhindered through the solid  
 door,  
 Vainly for recognition seek from chair to  
 chair,  
 And strive to speak and am but futile air,  
 As truly most of us are little more.

## 3.

Him most I see whom we most dearly miss,  
 The latest parted thence,  
 His features poised in genial armistice  
 And armed neutrality of self-defence  
 Beneath the forehead's walled preëminence,  
 While Tyro, plucking facts with careless  
 reach,  
 Settles off-hand our human how and whence;  
 The long-trained veteran scarcely wincing  
 hears  
 The infallible strategy of volunteers  
 Making through Nature's walls its easy  
 breach,  
 And seems to learn where he alone could  
 teach.  
 Ample and ruddy, the board's end he fills  
 As he our fireside were, our light and heat,  
 Centre where minds diverse and various  
 skills  
 Find their warm nook and stretch unham-  
 pered feet;  
 I see the firm benignity of face,  
 Wide-smiling champaign, without tameness  
 sweet,  
 The mass Teutonic toned to Gallic grace,  
 The eyes whose sunshine runs before the  
 lips  
 While Holmes's rockets curve their long  
 ellipse,  
 And burst in seeds of fire that burst  
 again  
 To drop in scintillating rain.

## 4.

There too the face half-rustic, half-divine,  
 Self-poised, sagacious, freaked with hu-  
 mor fine,  
 Of him who taught us not to mow and  
 mope  
 About our fancied selves, but seek our  
 scope  
 In Nature's world and Man's, nor fade to  
 hollow trope,  
 Content with our New World and timely  
 bold  
 To challenge the o'ermastery of the Old;  
 Listening with eyes averse I see him sit  
 Pricked with the cider of the Judge's wit  
 (Ripe-hearted homebrew, fresh and fresh  
 again),  
 While the wise nose's firm-built aquiline  
 Curves sharper to restrain  
 The merriment whose most unruly moods

Pass not the dumb laugh learned in listen-  
ing woods

Of silence-shedding pine:

Hard by is he whose art's consoling spell  
Hath given both worlds a whiff of  
asphodel,

His look still vernal 'mid the wintry ring  
Of petals that remember, not foretell,  
The paler primrose of a second spring.

5.

And more there are: but other forms  
arise

And seen as clear, albeit with dimmer  
eyes:

First he from sympathy still held apart  
By shrinking over-eagerness of heart,  
Cloud charged with searching fire, whose  
shadow's sweep

Heightened mean things with sense of  
brooding ill,  
And steeped in doom familiar field and  
hill,—

New England's poet, soul reserved and  
deep,

November nature with a name of May,  
Whom high o'er Concord plains we laid  
to sleep,

While the orchards mocked us in their  
white array

And building robins wondered at our  
tears,

Snatched in his prime, the shape august  
That should have stood unbent 'neath  
fourscore years,

The noble head, the eyes of furtive trust,  
All gone to speechless dust.

And he our passing guest,  
Shy nature, too, and stung with life's  
unrest,

Whom we too briefly had but could not  
hold,

Who brought ripe Oxford's culture to our  
board,

The Past's incalculable hoard,  
Mellowed by scutcheoned panes in clois-  
ters old,

Seclusions ivy-hushed, and pavements  
sweet

With immemorial lisp of musing feet;  
Young head time-tensured smoother than  
a friar's,

Boy face, but grave with answerless  
desires,

Poet in all that poets have of best,

But foiled with riddles dark and cloudy  
aims,

Who now hath found sure rest,  
Not by still Isis or historic Thames,  
Nor by the Charles he tried to love with  
me,

But, not misplaced, by Arno's hallowed  
brim,

Nor scorned by Santa Croce's neighboring  
fames,

Haply not mindless, wheresoe'er he be,  
Of violets that to-day I scattered over  
him;

He, too, is there,  
After the good centurion fitly named,  
Whom learning dulled not, nor convention  
tamed,

Shaking with burly mirth his hyacinthine  
hair,

Our hearty Grecian of Homeric ways,  
Still found the surer friend where least he  
hoped the praise.

6.

Yea truly, as the swallowing years  
Fall from us faster, like frost-loosened  
leaves

Pushed by the misty touch of shortening  
days,

And that unwakened winter nears,  
'T is the void chair our surest guest  
receives,

'T is lips long cold that give the warmest  
kiss,

'T is the lost voice comes oftenest to our  
ears;

We count our rosary by the beads we miss:  
To me, at least, it seemeth so,

An exile in the land once found divine,  
While my starved fire burns low,

And homeless winds at the loose casement  
whine

Shrill ditties of the snow-roofed Apen-  
nine.

IV

I.

Now forth into the darkness all are gone,  
But memory, still unsated, follows on,  
Retracing step by step our homeward  
walk,

With many a laugh among our serious  
talk,

Across the bridge where, on the dimpling  
tide,



The long red streamers from the windows  
glide,

Or the dim western moon  
Rocks her skiff's image on the broad lagoon,  
And Boston shows a soft Venetian side  
In that Arcadian light when roof and tree,  
Hard prose by daylight, dream in Italy;  
Or haply in the sky's cold chambers wide  
Shivered the winter stars, while all below,  
As if an end were come of human ill,  
The world was wrapt in innocence of snow  
And the cast-iron bay was blind and still;  
These were our poetry; in him perhaps  
Science had barred the gate that lets in  
dream,

And he would rather count the perch and  
bream

Than with the current's idle fancy lapse;  
And yet he had the poet's open eye  
That takes a frank delight in all it sees,  
Nor was earth voiceless, nor the mystic sky,  
To him the life-long friend of fields and  
trees:

Then came the prose of the suburban street,  
Its silence deepened by our echoing feet,  
And converse such as rambling hazard finds;  
Then he who many cities knew and many  
minds,

And men once world-noised, now mere  
Ossian forms

Of misty memory, bade them live anew  
As when they shared earth's manifold de-  
light,

In shape, in gait, in voice, in gesture true,  
And, with an accent heightening as he  
warms,

Would stop forgetful of the shortening  
night,

Drop my confining arm, and pour profuse  
Much worldly wisdom kept for others' use,  
Not for his own, for he was rash and free,  
His purse or knowledge all men's, like the  
sea.

Still can I hear his voice's shrilling might  
(With pauses broken, while the fitful spark  
He blew more hotly rounded on the dark  
To hint his features with a Rembrandt  
light)

Call Oken back, or Humboldt, or Lamarek,  
Or Cuvier's taller shade, and many more  
Whom he had seen, or knew from others'  
sight,

And make them men to me as ne'er before:  
Not seldom, as the undeadened fibre stirred  
Of noble friendships knit beyond the sea,

German or French thrust by the lagging  
word,

For a good leash of mother-tongues had he.  
At last, arrived at where our paths divide,  
"Good night!" and, ere the distance grew  
too wide,  
"Good night!" again; and now with  
cheated ear

I half hear his who mine shall never hear.

2.

Sometimes it seemed as if New England  
air

For his large lungs too parsimonious  
were,

As if those empty rooms of dogma drear  
Where the ghost shivers of a faith austere  
Counting the horns o'er of the Beast,  
Still searing those whose faith in it is  
least,

As if those snaps o' th' moral atmosphere  
That sharpen all the needles of the East,  
Had been to him like death,  
Accustomed to draw Europe's freer  
breath

In a more stable element;  
Nay, even our landscape, half the year  
morose,

Our practical horizon grimly pent,  
Our air, sincere of ceremonious haze,  
Forcing hard outlines mercilessly close,  
Our social monotone of level days,  
Might make our best seem banish-  
ment;

But it was nothing so;  
Haply his instinct might divine,  
Beneath our drift of puritanic snow,  
The marvel sensitive and fine  
Of sanguinaria over-rash to blow  
And trust its shyness to an air malign;  
Well might he prize truth's warranty  
and pledge

In the grim outcrop of our granite edge,  
Or Hebrew fervor flashing forth at need  
In the gaunt sons of Calvin's iron breed,  
As prompt to give as skilled to win and  
keep;

But, though such intuitions might not  
cheer,

Yet life was good to him, and, there or  
here,

With that sufficing joy, the day was never  
cheap;

Thereto his mind was its own ample  
sphere,

And, like those buildings great that  
through the year

Carry one temperature, his nature large  
Made its own climate, nor could any  
marge

Traced by convention stay him from his  
bent:

He had a habitude of mountain air;  
He brought wide outlook where he went,  
And could on sunny uplands dwell

Of prospect sweeter than the pastures fair  
High-hung of viny Neufchâtel;

Nor, surely, did he miss

Some pale, imaginary bliss

Of earlier sights whose inner landscape still  
was Swiss.

V

I.

I cannot think he wished so soon to die  
With all his senses full of eager heat,  
And rosy years that stood expectant by  
To buckle the winged sandals on their  
feet,

He that was friends with Earth, and all  
her sweet

Took with both hands unsparingly:  
Truly this life is precious to the root,  
And good the feel of grass beneath the  
foot;

To lie in buttercups and clover-bloom,  
Tenants in common with the bees,  
And watch the white clouds drift through  
gulfs of trees,

Is better than long waiting in the tomb;  
Only once more to feel the coming spring  
As the birds feel it, when it bids them  
sing,

Only once more to see the moon  
Through leaf-fringed abbey-arches of the  
elms

Curve her mild sickle in the West  
Sweet with the breath of hay-cocks, were  
a boon

Worth any promise of soothsayer realms  
Or casual hope of being elsewhere blest;  
To take December by the beard  
And crush the creaking snow with springy  
foot,

While overhead the North's dumb  
streamers shoot,

Till Winter fawn upon the cheek en-  
deared,

Then the long evening-ends

Lingered by cosy chimney-nooks,  
With high companionship of books

Or slipped talk of friends

And sweet habitual looks,

Is better than to stop the ears with dust:  
Too soon the spectre comes to say, "Thou  
must!"

2.

When toil-crooked hands are crost upon  
the breast,

They comfort us with sense of rest;

They must be glad to lie forever still;

Their work is ended with their day;

Another fills their room; 't is the World's  
ancient way,

Whether for good or ill;

But the deft spinners of the brain,

Who love each added day and find it  
gain,

Them overtakes the doom

To snap the half-grown flower upon the  
loom

(Trophy that was to be of life-long pain),  
The thread no other skill can ever knit  
again.

'T was so with him, for he was glad  
to live,

'T was doubly so, for he left work begun;  
Could not this eagerness of Fate forgive  
Till all the allotted flax were spun?

It matters not; for, go at night or noon,  
A friend, whene'er he dies, has died too  
soon,

And, once we hear the hopeless *He is*  
*dead*,

So far as flesh hath knowledge, all is  
said.

VI

I.

I seem to see the black procession go:  
That crawling prose of death too well I  
know,

The vulgar paraphrase of glorious woe;  
I see it wind through that unsightly  
grove,

Once beautiful, but long defaced  
With granite permanence of cockney  
taste

And all those grim disfigurements we  
love:

There, then, we leave him: Him? such  
costly waste

Nature rebels at: and it is not true

Of those most precious parts of him we  
knew:

Could we be conscious but as dreamers be,  
'T were sweet to leave this shifting life  
of tents

Sunk in the changeless calm of Deity;  
Nay, to be mingled with the elements,  
The fellow-servant of creative powers,  
Partaker in the solemn year's events,  
To share the work of busy-fingered  
hours,

To be night's silent almoner of dew,  
To rise again in plants and breathe and  
grow,

To stream as tides the ocean caverns  
through,

Or with the rapture of great winds to  
blow

About earth's shaken coigns, were not a  
fate

To leave us all-disconsolate;  
Even endless slumber in the sweetening  
sod

Of charitable earth

That takes out all our mortal stains,  
And makes us cleaner neighbors of the  
clod,

Metinks were better worth  
Than the poor fruit of most men's wake-  
ful pains,

The heart's insatiable ache:

But such was not his faith,

Nor mine: it may be he had trod  
Outside the plain old path of *God thus*  
*spake,*

But God to him was very God,

And not a visionary wraith

Skulking in murky corners of the mind,

And he was sure to be

Somehow, somewhere, imperishable as He,  
Not with His essence mystically combined,  
As some high spirits long, but whole and  
free,

A perfected and conscious Agassiz.

And such I figure him: the wise of old

Welcome and own him of their peaceful  
fold,

Not truly with the guild enrolled

Of him who seeking inward guessed

Diviner riddles than the rest,

And groping in the darks of thought

Touched the Great Hand and knew it  
not;

Rather he shares the daily light,

From reason's charier fountains won,

Of his great chief, the slow-paced Stagy-  
rite,

And Cuvier clasps once more his long-lost  
son.

## 2.

The shape erect is prone: forever stilled  
The winning tongue; the forehead's high-  
piled heap,

A cairn which every science helped to  
build,

Unvalued will its golden secrets keep:  
He knows at last if Life or Death be best:

Wherever he be flown, whatever vest

The being hath put on which lately here

So many-friended was, so full of cheer

To make men feel the Seeker's noble zest,

We have not lost him all; he is not gone

To the dumb herd of them that wholly  
die;

The beauty of his better self lives on

In minds he touched with fire, in many an  
eye

He trained to Truth's exact severity;

He was a Teacher: why be grieved for  
him

Whose living word still stimulates the air?

In endless file shall loving scholars come

The glow of his transmitted touch to share,

And trace his features with an eye less  
dim

Than ours whose sense familiar wont  
makes numb.

## TO HOLMES

## ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

DEAR Wendell, why need count the years

Since first your genius made me thrill,

If what moved then to smiles or tears,

Or both contending, move me still?

What has the Calendar to do

With poets? What Time's fruitless  
tooth

With gay immortals such as you

Whose years but emphasize your youth?

One air gave both their lease of breath;

The same paths lured our boyish feet;

One earth will hold us safe in death

With dust of saints and scholars sweet.

Our legends from one source were drawn,  
 I scarce distinguish yours from mine,  
 And *don't* we make the Gentiles yawn  
 With "You remembers?" o'er our  
 wine!

If I, with too senescent air,  
 Invade your elder memory's pale,  
 You snub me with a pitying "Where  
 Were you in the September Gale?"

Both stared entranced at Lafayette,  
 Saw Jackson dubbed with LL. D.  
 What Cambridge saw not strikes us yet  
 As scarcely worth one's while to see.

Ten years my senior, when my name  
 In Harvard's entrance-book was writ,  
 Her halls still echoed with the fame  
 Of you, her poet and her wit.

'T is fifty years from then to now:  
 But your Last Leaf renews its green,  
 Though, for the laurels on your brow  
 (So thick they crowd), 't is hardly seen.

The oriole's fledglings fifty times  
 Have flown from our familiar elms;  
 As many poets with their rhymes  
 Oblivion's darkling dust o'erwhelms.

The birds are hushed, the poets gone  
 Where no harsh critic's lash can reach,  
 And still your winged brood sing on  
 To all who love our English speech.

Nay, let the foolish records be  
 That make believe you 're seventy-five:  
 You 're the old Wendell still to me, —  
 And that 's the youngest man alive.

The gray-blue eyes, I see them still,  
 The gallant front with brown o'erhung,  
 The shape alert, the wit at will,  
 The phrase that stuck, but never stung.

You keep your youth as yon Scotch fir,  
 Whose gaunt line my horizon hems,  
 Though twilight all the lowland blurs,  
 Hold sunset in their ruddy stems.

You with the elders? Yes, 't is true,  
 But in no sadly literal sense,  
 With elders and coevals too,  
 Whose verb admits no preterite tense.

Master alike in speech and song  
 Of fame's great antiseptic — Style,  
 You with the classic few belong  
 Who tempered wisdom with a smile.

Outlive us all! Who else like you  
 Could sift the seedcorn from our chaff,  
 And make us with the pen we knew  
 Deathless at least in epitaph?

#### IN A COPY OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

THESE pearls of thought in Persian gulfs  
 were bred,  
 Each softly lucent as a rounded moon;  
 The diver Omar plucked them from their  
 bed,  
 Fitzgerald strung them on an English  
 thread.

Fit rosary for a queen, in shape and hue,  
 When Contemplation tells her pensive beads  
 Of mortal thoughts, forever old and new.  
 Fit for a queen? Why, surely then for  
 you!

The moral? Where Doubt's eddies toss  
 and twirl  
 Faith's slender shallop till her footing reel,  
 Plunge: if you find not peace beneath the  
 whirl,  
 Groping, you may like Omar grasp a pearl.

#### ON RECEIVING A COPY OF MR. AUSTIN DOBSON'S "OLD WORLD IDYLLS"

##### I

At length arrived, your book I take  
 To read in for the author's sake;  
 Too gray for new sensations grown,  
 Can charm to Art or Nature known  
 This torpor from my senses shake?

Hush! my parched ears what runnels  
 slake?  
 Is a thrush gurgling from the brake?  
 Has Spring, on all the breezes blown,  
 At length arrived?

Long may you live such songs to make,  
 And I to listen while you wake,



With skill of late disused, each tone  
Of the *Lesbourn barbiton*,  
At mastery, through long finger-ache,  
At length arrived.

## II

As I read on, what changes steal  
O'er me and through, from head to heel ?  
A rapier thrusts coat-skirt aside,  
My rough Tweeds bloom to silken pride, —  
Who was it laughed ? Your hand, Dick  
Steele !

Down vistas long of clipt *charmille*  
Watteau as Pierrot leads the reel;  
Tabor and pipe the dancers guide  
As I read on.

While in and out the verses wheel  
The wind-caught robes trim feet reveal,  
Lithe ankles that to music glide,  
But chastely and by chance descried;  
Art ? Nature ? Which do I most feel  
As I read on ?

## TO C. F. BRADFORD

## ON THE GIFT OF A MEERSCHAUM PIPE

THE pipe came safe, and welcome too,  
As anything must be from you;  
A meerschaum pure, 't would float as light  
As she the girls call Amphitrite.  
Mixture divine of foam and clay,  
From both it stole the best away:  
Its foam is such as crowns the glow  
Of beakers brimmed by *Veuve Clicquot*;  
Its clay is but congested lymph  
Jove chose to make some choicer nymph;  
And here combined, — why, this must be  
The birth of some enchanted sea,  
Shaped to immortal form, the type  
And very Venus of a pipe.

When high I heap it with the weed  
From Lethe wharf, whose potent seed  
Nicotia, big from Bacchus, bore  
And cast upon Virginia's shore,  
I'll think, — So fill the fairer bowl  
And wise alembic of thy soul,  
With herbs far-sought that shall distil,  
Not fumes to slacken thought and will,  
But bracing essences that nerve  
To wait, to dare, to strive, to serve.

When curls the smoke in eddies soft,  
And hangs a shifting dream aloft,  
That gives and takes, though chance-de-  
signed,

The impress of the dreamer's mind,  
I'll think, — So let the vapors bred  
By Passion, in the heart or head,  
Pass off and upward into space,  
Waving farewells of tenderest grace,  
Remembered in some happier time,  
To blend their beauty with my rhyme.

While slowly o'er its candid bowl  
The color deepens (as the soul  
That burns in mortals leaves its trace  
Of bale or beauty on the face),  
I'll think, — So let the essence rare  
Of years consuming make me fair;  
So, 'gainst the ills of life profuse,  
Steep me in some narcotic juice;  
And if my soul must part with all  
That whiteness which we greenness call,  
Smooth back, O Fortune, half thy frown,  
And make me beautifully brown !

Dream-forger, I refill thy cup  
With reverie's wasteful pittance up,  
And while the fire burns slow away,  
Hiding itself in ashes gray,  
I'll think, — As inward Youth retreats,  
Compelled to spare his wasting heats,  
When Life's Ash-Wednesday comes about,  
And my head's gray with fires burnt out,  
While stays one spark to light the eye,  
With the last flash of memory,  
'T will leap to welcome C. F. B.,  
Who sent my favorite pipe to me.

## BANKSIDE

## (HOME OF EDMUND QUINCY)

DEDHAM, MAY 21, 1877

Edmund Quincy was eleven years the senior of Lowell, but their common labors in the early days of the anti-slavery movement, and their congeniality of temper and wit, made them very intimate friends.

## I

I CHRISTENED you in happier days, before  
These gray forebodings on my brow were  
seen;

You are still lovely in your new-leaved  
 green;  
 The brimming river soothes his grassy  
 shore;  
 The bridge is there; the rock with lichens  
 hoar;  
 And the same shadows on the water lean,  
 Outlasting us. How many graves between  
 That day and this! How many shadows  
 more  
 Darken my heart, their substance from  
 these eyes  
 Hidden forever! So our world is made  
 Of life and death commingled; and the  
 sighs  
 Outweigh the smiles, in equal balance laid:  
 What compensation? None, save that the  
 Allwise  
 So schools us to love things that cannot  
 fade.

## II

Thank God, he saw you last in pomp of  
 May,  
 Ere any leaf had felt the year's regret;  
 Your latest image in his memory set  
 Was fair as when your landscape's peaceful  
 sway  
 Charmed dearer eyes with his to make  
 delay  
 On Hope's long prospect, — as if They for-  
 get  
 The happy, They, the unspeakable Three,  
 whose debt,  
 Like the hawk's shadow, blots our brightest  
 day:  
 Better it is that ye should look so fair,  
 Slopes that he loved, and ever-murmuring  
 pines  
 That make a music out of silent air,  
 And bloom-heaped orchard-trees in pros-  
 perous lines;  
 In you the heart some sweeter hints divines,  
 And wiser, than in winter's dull despair.

## III

Old Friend, farewell! Your kindly door  
 again  
 I enter, but the master's hand in mine  
 No more clasps welcome, and the temperate  
 wine,  
 That cheered our long nights, other lips  
 must stain:  
 All is unchanged, but I expect in vain  
 The face alert, the manners free and fine,

The seventy years borne lightly as the pine  
 Wears its first down of snow in green dis-  
 dain:

Much did he, and much well; yet most of  
 all

I prized his skill in leisure and the ease  
 Of a life flowing full without a plan;  
 For most are idly busy; him I call  
 Thrice fortunate who knew himself to  
 please,  
 Learned in those arts that make a gentle-  
 man.

## IV

Nor deem he lived unto himself alone;  
 His was the public spirit of his sire,  
 And in those eyes, soft with domestic fire,  
 A quenchless light of fiercer temper shone  
 What time about the world our shame was  
 blown  
 On every wind; his soul would not con-  
 spire  
 With selfish men to soothe the mob's de-  
 sire,  
 Veiling with garlands Moloch's bloody  
 stone;  
 The high-bred instincts of a better day  
 Ruled in his blood, when to be citizen  
 Rang Roman yet, and a Free People's sway  
 Was not the exchequer of impoverished  
 men,  
 Nor statesmanship with loaded votes to  
 play,  
 Nor public office a tramps' boosing-ken.

## JOSEPH WINLOCK

DIED JUNE 11, 1875

Mr. Winlock was at the head of the Harvard  
 Astronomical Observatory at the time of his  
 death.

SHY soul and stalwart, man of patient will  
 Through years one hair's-breadth on our  
 Dark to gain,

Who, from the stars he studied not in vain,  
 Had learned their secret to be strong and  
 still,

Careless of fames that earth's tin trum-  
 pets fill;

Born under Leo, broad of build and brain,  
 While others slept, he watched in that  
 hushed fane

Of Science, only witness of his skill:

Sudden as falls a shooting-star he fell,  
But inextinguishable his luminous trace  
In mind and heart of all that knew him  
well.

Happy man's doom! To him the Fates  
were known

Of orbs dim hovering on the skirts of  
space,

Unprescient, through God's mercy, of his  
own!

## SONNET

TO FANNY ALEXANDER

The daughter of an American portrait  
painter who spent his life in Italy, and herself  
known through her sympathetic and delicate  
portraiture of Italian peasant life, especially  
in her *Roadside Songs of Tuscany*. The poem  
is dated at Florence in 1873.

UNCONSCIOUS as the sunshine, simply sweet  
And generous as that, thou dost not close  
Thyself in art, as life were but a rose  
To rumple bee-like with luxurious feet;  
Thy higher mind therein finds sure retreat,  
But not from care of common hopes and  
woes;

Thee the dark chamber, thee the unfriended,  
knows,

Although no babbling crowds thy praise  
repeat:

Consummate artist, who life's landscape  
bleak

Hast brimmed with sun to many a clouded  
eye,

Touched to a brighter hue the beggar's  
cheek,

Hung over orphaned lives a gracious sky,  
And traced for eyes, that else would vainly  
seek,

Fair pictures of an angel drawing nigh!

JEFFRIES WYMAN

DIED SEPTEMBER 4, 1874

An associate of Lowell in Cambridge, and  
eminent as a man of science in the field of  
comparative anatomy.

THE wisest man could ask no more of Fate  
Than to be simple, modest, manly, true,

Safe from the Many, honored by the Few;  
To count as naught in World, or Church,  
or State,

But inwardly in secret to be great;

To feel mysterious Nature ever new;

To touch, if not to grasp, her endless clue,

And learn by each discovery how to wait.

He widened knowledge and escaped the  
praise;

He wisely taught, because more wise to  
learn;

He toiled for Science, not to draw men's  
gaze,

But for her lore of self-denial stern.

That such a man could spring from our  
decays

Fans the soul's nobler faith until it burn.

## TO A FRIEND

WHO GAVE ME A GROUP OF WEEDS AND  
GRASSES, AFTER A DRAWING OF DÜRER

TRUE as the sun's own work, but more  
refined,

It tells of love behind the artist's eye,

Of sweet companionships with earth and  
sky,

And summers stored, the sunshine of the  
mind.

What peace! Sure, ere you breathe, the  
fickle wind

Will break its truce and bend that grass-  
plume high,

Scarcely yet quiet from the gilded fly

That flits a more luxurious perch to find.

Thanks for a pleasure that can never pall,

A serene moment, deftly caught and kept

To make immortal summer on my wall.

Had he who drew such gladness ever  
wept?

Ask rather could he else have seen at all,  
Or grown in Nature's mysteries an adept?

## WITH AN ARMCHAIR

I.

ABOUT the oak that framed this chair, of  
old

The seasons danced their round; delighted  
wings

Brought music to its boughs; shy wood-  
land things

Shared its broad roof, 'neath whose green  
glooms grown bold,  
Lovers, more shy than they, their secret  
told;

The resurrection of a thousand springs  
Swelled in its veins, and dim imaginings  
Teased them, perchance, of life more mani-  
fold.

Such shall it know when its proud arms  
enclose

My Lady Goshawk, musing here at rest,  
Careless of him who into exile goes,  
Yet, while his gift by those fair limbs is  
prest,

Through some fine sympathy of nature  
knows

That, seas between us, she is still his guest.

2.

Yet sometimes, let me dream, the con-  
scious wood

A momentary vision may renew  
Of him who counts it treasure that he  
knew,

Though but in passing, such a priceless  
good,

And, like an elder brother, felt his mood  
Uplifted by the spell that kept her true,  
Amid her lightsome compeers, to the few  
That wear the crown of serious woman-  
hood:

Were he so happy, think of him as one  
Who in the Louvre or Pitti feels his soul  
Rapt by some dead face which, till then  
unseen,

Moves like a memory, and, till life outrun,  
Is vexed with vague misgiving past con-  
trol,

Of nameless loss and thwarted might-have-  
been.

E. G. DE R.

WHY should I seek her spell to decompose  
Or to its source each rill of influence trace  
That feeds the brimming river of her  
grace?

The petals numbered but degrade to prose  
Summer's triumphant poem of the rose:  
Enough for me to watch the wavering  
chase,

Like wind o'er grass, of moods across her  
face,

Fairest in motion, fairer in repose.

Steeped in her sunshine, let me, while I  
may,

Partake the bounty: ample 't is for me  
That her mirth cheats my temples of their  
gray,

Her charm makes years long spent seem  
yet to be.

Wit, goodness, grace, swift flash from  
grave to gay, —

All these are good, but better far is she.

## BON VOYAGE

SHIP, blest to bear such freight across the  
blue,

May stormless stars control thy horoscope;  
In keel and hull, in every spar and rope,  
Be night and day to thy dear office true!

Ocean, men's path and their divider too,  
No fairer shrine of memory and hope  
To the underworld adown thy westering  
slope

E'er vanished, or whom such regrets pur-  
sue:

Smooth all thy surges as when Jove to  
Crete

Swam with less costly burthen, and pre-  
pare

A pathway meet for her home-coming  
soon

With golden undulations such as greet  
The printless summer-sandals of the moon  
And tempt the Nautilus his cruise to dare!

## TO WHITTIER

ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

NEW ENGLAND's poet, rich in love as  
years,

Her hills and valleys praise thee, her swift  
brooks

Dance in thy verse; to her grave sylvan  
nooks

Thy steps allure us, which the wood-thrush  
hears

As maids their lovers', and no treason  
fears;

Through thee her Merrimacs and Agio-  
chooks

And many a name uncouth win gracious  
looks,

Sweetly familiar to both Englands' ears:



Peaceful by birthright as a virgin lake,  
 The lily's anchorage, which no eyes behold  
 Save those of stars, yet for thy brother's  
   sake  
 That lay in bonds, thou blewst a blast as  
   bold  
 As that wherewith the heart of Roland  
   brake,  
 Far heard across the New World and the  
   Old.

#### ON AN AUTUMN SKETCH OF H. G. WILD

THANKS to the artist, ever on my wall  
 The sunset stays: that hill in glory rolled,  
 Those trees and clouds in crimson and in  
   gold,  
 Burn on, nor cool when evening's shadows  
   fall.  
 Not round *these* splendors Midnight wraps  
   her pall;  
*These* leaves the flush of Autumn's vintage  
   hold  
 In Winter's lips, nor can the Northwind  
   bold  
 Deface my chapel's western window small:  
 On one, ah me! October struck his frost,  
 But not repaid him with those Tyrian  
   hues;  
 His naked boughs but tell him what is lost,  
 And parting comforts of the sun refuse:  
 His heaven is bare, — ah, were its hollow  
   crost  
 Even with a cloud whose light were yet to  
   lose!

#### TO MISS D. T.

##### ON HER GIVING ME A DRAWING OF LITTLE STREET ARABS

Miss Dorothy Tennant afterward married  
 Henry M. Stanley, the African explorer.

As, cleansed of Tiber's and Oblivion's  
   slime,  
 Glow Farnesina's vaults with shapes again  
 That dreamed some exiled artist from his  
   pain  
 Back to his Athens and the Muse's clime,  
 So these world-orphaned waifs of Want  
   and Crime,

Purged by Art's absolution from the stain  
 Of the polluting city-flood, regain  
 Ideal grace secure from taint of time.  
 An Attic frieze you give, a pictured song;  
 For as with words the poet paints, for  
   you  
 The happy pencil at its labor sings,  
 Stealing his privilege, nor does him wrong,  
 Beneath the false discovering the true,  
 And Beauty's best in unregarded things.

#### WITH A COPY OF AUCASSIN AND NICOLETE

LEAVES fit to have been poor Juliet's  
   cradle-rhyme,  
 With gladness of a heart long quenched in  
   mould  
 They vibrate still, a nest not yet grown  
   cold  
 From its fledged burthen. The numb  
   hand of Time  
 Vainly his glass turns; here is endless  
   prime;  
 Here lips their roses keep and locks their  
   gold;  
 Here Love in pristine innocency bold  
 Speaks what our grosser conscience makes  
   a crime.  
 Because it tells the dream that all have  
   known  
 Once in their lives, and to life's end the  
   few;  
 Because its seeds o'er Memory's desert  
   blown  
 Spring up in heartsease such as Eden  
   knew;  
 Because it hath a beauty all its own,  
 Dear Friend, I plucked this herb of grace  
   for you.

#### ON PLANTING A TREE AT IN- VERARAY

WHO does his duty is a question  
 Too complex to be solved by me,  
 But he, I venture the suggestion,  
   Does part of his that plants a tree.

For after he is dead and buried,  
 And epitaphed, and well forgot,  
 Nay, even his shade by Charon ferried  
   To — let us not inquire to what,

His deed, its author long outliving,  
 By Nature's mother-care increased,  
 Shall stand, his verdant almoner, giving  
 A kindly dole to man and beast.

The wayfarer, at noon reposing,  
 Shall bless its shadow on the grass,  
 Or sheep beneath it huddle, dozing  
 Until the thundergust o'erpass.

The owl, belated in his plundering,  
 Shall here await the friendly night,  
 Blinking whene'er he wakes, and wondering  
 What fool it was invented light.

Hither the busy birds shall flutter,  
 With the light timber for their nests,  
 And, pausing from their labor, utter  
 The morning sunshine in their breasts.

What though his memory shall have vanished,  
 Since the good deed he did survives?  
 It is not wholly to be banished  
 Thus to be part of many lives.

Grow, then, my foster-child, and strengthen,  
 Bough over bough, a murmurous pile,  
 And, as your stately stem shall lengthen,  
 So may the statelier of Argyll!

#### AN EPISTLE TO GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

"De prodome,  
 Des qu'il s'atorne a grant bonte  
 Ja n'iert tot dit ne tot conte,  
 Que leingue ne puet pas retraire."  
 Tant d'enor com prodom set faire."  
 CRESTIEN DE TROIES,  
*Li Romans dou Chevalier au Lyon*, 784-788.

1874

CURTIS, whose Wit, with Fancy arm in arm,  
 Masks half its muscle in its skill to charm,  
 And who so gently can the Wrong expose  
 As sometimes to make converts, never foes,  
 Or only such as good men must expect,  
 Knaves sore with conscience of their own  
 defect,

I come with mild remonstrance. Ere I  
 start,

A kindlier errand interrupts my heart,  
 And I must utter, though it vex your ears,

The love, the honor, felt so many years.  
 Curtis, skilled equally with voice and pen  
 To stir the hearts or mould the minds of  
 men, —

That voice whose music, for I've heard you  
 sing

Sweet as Casella, can with passion ring,  
 That pen whose rapid ease ne'er trips with  
 haste,

Nor scrapes nor sputters, pointed with good  
 taste,

First Steele's, then Goldsmith's, next it  
 came to you,

Whom Thackeray rated best of all our  
 crew, —

Had letters kept you, every wreath were  
 yours;

Had the World tempted, all its chariest  
 doors

Had swung on flattered hinges to admit  
 Such high-bred manners, such good-natured  
 wit;

At courts, in senates, who so fit to serve?  
 And both invited, but you would not swerve,  
 All meaner prizes waiving that you might  
 In civic duty spend your heat and light,  
 Unpaid, untrammelled, with a sweet disdain  
 Refusing posts men grovel to attain.

Good Man all own you; what is left me,  
 then,

To heighten praise with but Good Citizen?

But why this praise to make you blush and  
 stare,

And give a backache to your Easy-Chair?  
 Old Crestien rightly says no language can  
 Express the worth of a true Gentleman,  
 And I agree; but other thoughts deride  
 My first intent, and lure my pen aside.

Thinking of you, I see my firelight glow  
 On other faces, loved from long ago,  
 Dear to us both, and all these loves com-  
 bine

With this I send and crowd in every line;  
 Fortune with me was in such generous mood  
 That all my friends were yours, and all  
 were good;

Three generations come when one I call,  
 And the fair grandame, youngest of them  
 all,

In her own Florida who found and sips  
 The fount that fled from Ponce's longing  
 lips.

How bright they rise and wreath my  
 hearthstone round,

Divine my thoughts, reply without a sound,  
 And with them many a shape that memory  
   sees,  
 As dear as they, but crowned with aureoles  
   these !  
 What wonder if, with protest in my thought,  
 Arrived, I find 't was only love I brought ?  
 I came with protest; Memory barred the  
   road  
 Till I repaid you half the debt I owed.

No, 't was not to bring laurels that I came,  
 Nor would you wish it, daily seeing fame,  
 (Or our cheap substitute, unknown of yore,)  
 Dumped like a load of coal at every door,  
 Mime and hetæra getting equal weight  
 With him whose toils heroic saved the State.  
 But praise can harm not who so calmly  
   met

Slander's worst word, nor treasured up the  
   debt,  
 Knowing, what all experience serves to  
   show,

No mud can soil us but the mud we throw.  
 You have heard harsher voices and more  
   loud,

As all must, not sworn liegemen of the  
   crowd,

And far aloof your silent mind could keep  
 As when, in heavens with winter-midnight  
   deep,

The perfect moon hangs thoughtful, nor  
   can know

What hounds her lucent calm drives mad  
   below.

But to my business, while you rub your  
   eyes

And wonder how you ever thought me wise.  
 Dear friend and old, they say you shake  
   your head

And wish some bitter words of mine un-  
   said:

I wish they might be, — there we are  
   agreed;

I hate to speak, still more what makes the  
   need;

But I must utter what the voice within  
 Dictates, for acquiescence dumb were sin;  
 I blurt ungrateful truths, if so they be,  
 That none may need to say them after me.  
 'T were my felicity could I attain

The temperate zeal that balances your  
   brain;

But nature still o'erleaps reflection's plan,

And one must do his service as he can.  
 Think you it were not pleasanter to speak  
 Smooth words that leave unflushed the  
   brow and cheek ?

To sit, well-dined, with cynic smile, unseen  
 In private box, spectator of the scene  
 Where men the comedy of life rehearse,  
 Idly to judge which better and which  
   worse

Each hireling actor spoiled his worthless  
   part ?

Were it not sweeter with a careless heart,  
 In happy commune with the untainted  
   brooks,

To dream all day, or, walled with silent  
   books,

To hear nor heed the World's unmeaning  
   noise,

Safe in my fortress stored with lifelong  
   joys ?

I love too well the pleasures of retreat  
 Safe from the crowd and cloistered from  
   the street;

The fire that whispers its domestic joy,  
 Flickering on walls that knew me still a  
   boy,

And knew my saintly father; the full days,  
 Not careworn from the world's soul-squan-  
   dering ways,

Calm days that loiter with snow-silent  
   tread,

Nor break my commune with the undying  
   dead;

Truants of Time, to-morrow like to-day,  
 That come unbid, and claimless glide away  
 By shelves that sun them in the indulgent  
   Past,

Where Spanish castles, even, were built to  
   last,

Where saint and sage their silent vigil keep,  
 And wrong hath ceased or sung itself to  
   sleep.

Dear were my walks, too, gathering fra-  
   grant store

Of Mother Nature's simple-minded lore:  
 I learned all weather-signs of day or night;  
 No bird but I could name him by his flight,  
 No distant tree but by his shape was  
   known,

Or, near at hand, by leaf or bark alone.

This learning won by loving looks I hived  
 As sweeter lore than all from books derived.

I know the charm of hillside, field, and  
   wood,

Of lake and stream, and the sky's downy  
brood,  
Of roads sequestered rimmed with fallow  
soil,  
But friends with hardhack, aster, golden-  
rod,  
Or succory keeping summer long its trust  
Of heaven-blue fleckless from the eddying  
dust:  
These were my earliest friends, and latest  
too,  
Still unestranged, whatever fate may do.  
For years I had these treasures, knew their  
worth,  
Estate most real man can have on earth.  
I sank too deep in this soft-stuffed repose  
That hears but rumors of earth's wrongs  
and woes;  
Too well these Capuas could my muscles  
waste,  
Not void of toils, but toils of choice and  
taste;  
These still had kept me could I but have  
quelled  
The Puritan drop that in my veins rebelled.  
But there were times when silent were my  
books  
As jailers are, and gave me sullen looks,  
When verses palled, and even the woodland  
path,  
By innocent contrast, fed my heart with  
wrath,  
And I must twist my little gift of words  
Into a scourge of rough and knotted cords  
Unmusical, that whistle as they swing  
To leave on shameless backs their purple  
sting.

How slow Time comes ! Gone, who so swift  
as he ?  
Add but a year, 't is half a century  
Since the slave's stifled moaning broke my  
sleep,  
Heard 'gainst my will in that seclusion  
deep,  
Haply heard louder for the silence there,  
And so my fancied safeguard made my  
snare.  
After that moan had sharpened to a cry,  
And a cloud, hand-broad then, heaped all  
our sky  
With its stored vengeance, and such thun-  
ders stirred  
As heaven's and earth's remotest chambers  
heard,

I looked to see an ampler atmosphere  
By that electric passion-gust blown clear.  
I looked for this; consider what I see —  
But I forbear, 't would please nor you nor  
me

To check the items in the bitter list  
Of all I counted on and all I mist.  
Only three instances I choose from all,  
And each enough to stir a pigeon's gall:  
Office a fund for ballot-brokers made  
To pay the drudges of their gainful trade;  
Our cities taught what conquered cities  
feel

By ædiles chosen that they might safely  
steal;

And gold, however got, a title fair  
To such respect as only gold can bear.  
I seem to see this; how shall I gainsay  
What all our journals tell me every day ?  
Poured our young martyrs their high-  
hearted blood

That we might trample to congenial mud  
The soil with such a legacy sublimed ?  
Methinks an angry scorn is here well-  
timed:

Where find retreat ? How keep reproach  
at bay ?

Where'er I turn some scandal fouls the  
way.

Dear friend, if any man I wished to please,  
'T were surely you whose humor's honied  
ease

Flows flecked with gold of thought, whose  
generous mind

Sees Paradise regained by all mankind,  
Whose brave example still to vanward  
shines,

Checks the retreat, and spurs our lagging  
lines.

Was I too bitter ? Who his phrase can  
choose

That sees the life-blood of his dearest  
ooze ?

I loved my Country so as only they  
Who love a mother fit to die for may;  
I loved her old renown, her stainless  
fame, —

What better proof than that I loathed her  
shame ?

That many blamed me could not irk me  
long,

But, if you doubted, must I not be wrong ?  
'T is not for me to answer: this I know,  
That man or race so prosperously low



Sunk in success that wrath they cannot  
 feel,  
 Shall taste the spurn of parting Fortune's  
 heel ;  
 For never land long lease of empire won  
 Whose sons date silent when base deeds  
 were done.

## POSTSCRIPT, 1887

Curtis, so wrote I thirteen years ago,  
 Tost it unfinished by, and left it so ;  
 Found lately, I have pieced it out, or tried,  
 Since time for callid juncture was denied,  
 Some of the verses pleased me, it is true,  
 And still were pertinent, — those honoring  
 you.  
 These now I offer : take them, if you  
 will,  
 Like the old hand-grasp, when at Shady  
 Hill  
 We met, or Staten Island, in the days  
 When life was its own spur, nor needed  
 praise.  
 If once you thought me rash, no longer  
 fear ;  
 Past my next milestone waits my seven-  
 tieth year.  
 I mount no longer when the trumpets  
 call ;  
 My battle-harness idles on the wall,  
 The spider's castle, camping-ground of  
 dust,  
 Not without dints, and all in front, I trust.  
 Shivering sometimes it calls me as it hears  
 Afar the charge's tramp and clash of  
 spears ;  
 But 't is such murmur only as might be  
 The sea-shell's lost tradition of the sea,  
 That makes me muse and wonder Where ?  
 and When ?  
 While from my cliff I watch the waves of  
 men  
 That climb to break midway their seeming  
 gain,  
 And think it triumph if they shake their  
 chain.  
 Little I ask of Fate ; will she refuse  
 Some days of reconciliation with the  
 Muse ?  
 I take my reed again and blow it free  
 Of dusty silence, murmuring, " Sing to  
 me !"  
 And, as its stops my curious touch retries,  
 The stir of earlier instincts I surprise, —

Instincts, if less imperious, yet more  
 strong,  
 And happy in the toil that ends with song.  
 Home am I come : not, as I hoped might  
 be,  
 To the old haunts, too full of ghosts for me,  
 But to the olden dreams that time en-  
 dears,  
 And the loved books that younger grow  
 with years ;  
 To country rambles, timing with my tread  
 Some happier verse that carols in my  
 head,  
 Yet all with sense of something vainly  
 mist,  
 Of something lost, but when I never wist.  
 How empty seems to me the populous  
 street,  
 One figure gone I daily loved to meet, —  
 The clear, sweet singer with the crown of  
 snow  
 Not whiter than the thoughts that housed  
 below !  
 And, ah, what absence feel I at my side,  
 Like Dante when he missed his laurelled  
 guide,  
 What sense of diminution in the air  
 Once so inspiring, Emerson not there !  
 But life is sweet, though all that makes it  
 sweet  
 Lessen like sound of friends' departing  
 feet,  
 And Death is beautiful as feet of friend  
 Coming with welcome at our journey's  
 end ;  
 For me Fate gave, whate'er she else de-  
 nied,  
 A nature sloping to the southern side ;  
 I thank her for it, though when clouds  
 arise  
 Such natures double-darken gloomy skies.  
 I muse upon the margin of the sea,  
 Our common pathway to the new To Be,  
 Watching the sails, that lessen more and  
 more,  
 Of good and beautiful embarked before ;  
 With bits of wreck I patch the boat shall  
 bear  
 Me to that unexhausted Otherwhere,  
 Whose friendly-peopled shore I sometimes  
 see,  
 By soft mirage uplifted, beckon me,  
 Nor sadly hear, as lower sinks the sun,  
 My moorings to the past snap one by one.

## II. SENTIMENT

## ENDYMION

A MYSTICAL COMMENT ON TITIAN'S  
"SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE"

## I

My day began not till the twilight fell,  
And, lo, in ether from heaven's sweetest  
well,

The New Moon swam divinely isolate  
In maiden silence, she that makes my fate  
Haply not knowing it, or only so  
As I the secrets of my sheep may know;  
Nor ask I more, entirely blest if she,  
In letting me adore, ennoble me  
To height of what the Gods meant mak-  
ing man,

As only she and her best beauty can.  
Mine be the love that in itself can find  
Seed of white thoughts, the lilies of the  
mind,

Seed of that glad surrender of the will  
That finds in service self's true purpose  
still;

Love that in outward fairness sees the tent  
Pitched for an inmate far more excellent;  
Love with a light irradiate to the core,  
Lit at her lamp, but fed from inborn  
store;

Love thrice-requested with the single joy  
Of an immaculate vision naught could  
cloy,

Dearer because, so high beyond my scope,  
My life grew rich with her, unbribed by  
hope

Of other guerdon save to think she knew  
One grateful votary paid her all her due;  
Happy if she, high-radiant there, resigned  
To his sure trust her image in his mind.  
O fairer even than Peace is when she  
comes

Hushing War's tumult, and retreating  
drums

Fade to a murmur like the sough of bees  
Hidden among the noon-stilled linden-trees,  
Bringer of quiet, thou that canst allay  
The dust and din and travail of the day,  
Strewer of Silence, Giver of the dew  
That doth our pastures and our souls re-  
new,

Still dwell remote, still on thy shoreless sea

Float unattained in silent empery,  
Still light my thoughts, nor listen to a  
prayer

Would make thee less imperishably fair!

## II

Can, then, my twofold nature find content  
In vain conceits of airy blandishment?  
Ask I no more? Since yesterday I task  
My storm-strewn thoughts to tell me what

I ask:

Faint premonitions of mutation strange  
Steal o'er my perfect orb, and, with the  
change,

Myself am changed; the shadow of my  
earth

Darkens the disk of that celestial worth  
Which only yesterday could still suffice  
Upwards to waft my thoughts in sacrifice;  
My heightened fancy with its touches  
warm

Moulds to a woman's that ideal form;  
Nor yet a woman's wholly, but divine  
With awe her purer essence bred in mine.  
Was it long brooding on their own surmise,  
Which, of the eyes engendered, fools the  
eyes,

Or have I seen through that translucent air  
A Presence shaped in its seclusions bare,  
My Goddess looking on me from above  
As look our russet maidens when they love,  
But high-uplifted o'er our human heat  
And passion-paths too rough for her pearl  
feet?

Slowly the Shape took outline as I gazed  
At her full-orbed or crescent, till, bedazed  
With wonder-working light that subtly  
wrought

My brain to its own substance, steeping  
thought

In trances such as poppies give, I saw  
Things shut from vision by sight's sober  
law,

Amorphous, changeful, but defined at last  
Into the peerless Shape mine eyes hold  
fast.

This, too, at first I worshipt: soon, like  
wine,

Her eyes, in mine poured, frenzy-philtred  
mine;

Passion put Worship's priestly raiment on  
And to the woman knelt, the Goddess gone.  
Was I, then, more than mortal made? or  
she

Less than divine that she might mate with  
me ?

If mortal merely, could my nature cope  
With such o'ermastery of maddening  
hope ?

If Goddess, could she feel the blissful woe  
That women in their self-surrender know ?

## III

Long she abode aloof there in her heaven,  
Far as the grape-bunch of the Pleiad seven  
Beyond my madness' utmost leap; but  
here

Mine eyes have feigned of late her rapture  
near,

Moulded of mind-mist that broad day dis-  
pels,

Here in these shadowy woods and brook-  
lulled dells.

Have no heaven-habitants e'er felt a void  
In hearts sublimed with ichor unalloyed ?  
E'er longed to mingle with a mortal fate  
Intense with pathos of its briefer date ?

Could she partake, and live, our human  
stains ?

Even with the thought there tingles through  
my veins

Sense of unwarned renewal; I, the dead,  
Receive and house again the ardor fled,  
As once Alcestitis; to the ruddy brim  
Feel masculine virtue flooding every limb,  
And life, like Spring returning, brings the  
key

That sets my senses from their winter free,  
Dancing like naked fauns too glad for  
shame.

Her passion, purified to palest flame,  
Can it thus kindle ? Is her purpose this ?  
I will not argue, lest I lose a bliss  
That makes me dream Tithonus' fortune  
mine,

(Or what of it was palpably divine  
Ere came the fruitlessly immortal gift;)  
I cannot curb my hope's imperious drift  
That wings with fire my dull mortality;  
Though fancy-forged, 't is all I feel or see.

## IV

My Goddess sinks; round Latmos' darken-  
ing brow

Trembles the parting of her presence now,  
Faint as the perfume left upon the grass  
By her limbs' pressure or her feet that  
pass

By me conjectured, but conjectured so  
As things I touch far fainter substance  
show.

Was it mine eyes' imposture I have seen  
Flit with the moonbeams on from shade to  
sheen

Through the wood-openings ? Nay, I see  
her now

Out of her heaven new-lighted, from her  
brow

The hair breeze-scattered, like loose mists  
that blow

Across her crescent, goldening as they go  
High-kirtled for the chase, and what was  
shown,

Of maiden rondure, like the rose half-  
blown.

If dream, turn real ! If a vision, stay !  
Take mortal shape, my philtre's spell obey !  
If hags compel thee from thy secret sky  
With gruesome incantations, why not I,  
Whose only magic is that I distil  
A potion, blent of passion, thought, and  
will,

Deeper in reach, in force of fate more rich,  
Than e'er was juice wrung by Thessalian  
witch

From moon-enchanted herbs, — a potion  
brewed

Of my best life in each diviner mood ?  
Myself the elixir am, myself the bowl  
Seething and mantling with my soul of soul.  
Taste and be humanized: what though the  
cup,

With thy lips frenzied, shatter ? Drink it  
up !

If but these arms may clasp, o'erquited so,  
My world, thy heaven, all life means I  
shall know.

## V

Sure she hath heard my prayer and granted  
half,

As Gods do who at mortal madness laugh.  
Yet if life's solid things illusion seem,  
Why may not substance wear the mask of  
dream ?

In sleep she comes; she visits me in dreams,  
And, as her image in a thousand streams,  
So in my veins, that her obey, she sees,  
Floating and flaming there, her images  
Bear to my little world's remotest zone  
Glad messages of her, and her alone.

With silence-sandalled Sleep she comes to  
me,

(But softer-footed, sweeter-browed, than she,)

In motion gracious as a seagull's wing,  
And all her bright limbs, moving, seem to sing.

Let me believe so, then, if so I may  
With the night's bounty feed my beggared day.

In dreams I see her lay the goddess down  
With bow and quiver, and her crescent-crown

Flicker and fade away to dull eclipse  
As down to mine she deigns her lounged-for lips;

And as her neck my happy arms enfold,  
Flooded and lusted with her loosened gold,  
She whispers words each sweeter than a kiss:

Then, wakened with the shock of sudden bliss,

My arms are empty, my awakener fled,  
And, silent in the silent sky o'erhead,  
But coldly as on ice-plated snow, she gleams,

Herself the mother and the child of dreams.

## VI

Gone is the time when phantasms could appease

My quest phantasmal and bring cheated ease;

When, if she glorified my dreams, I felt  
Through all my limbs a change immortal melt

At touch of hers illuminate with soul.

Not long could I be stilled with Fancy's dole;

Too soon the mortal mixture in me caught  
Red fire from her celestial flame, and fought

For tyrannous control in all my veins:  
My fool's prayer was accepted; what remains?

Or was it some eidolon merely, sent  
By her who rules the shades in banishment,  
To mock me with her semblance? Were it thus,

How 'scape I shame, whose will was traitorous?

What shall compensate an ideal dimmed?  
How blanch again my statue virgin-limbed,  
Soiled with the incense-smoke her chosen priest

Poured more profusely as within decreased  
The fire unearthly, fed with coals from far

Within the soul's shrine? Could my fallen star

Be set in heaven again by prayers and tears  
And quenchless sacrifice of all my years,  
How would the victim to the flamen leap,  
And life for life's redemption paid hold cheap!

But what resource when she herself descends

From her blue throne, and o'er her vassal bends

That shape thrice-deified by love, those eyes

Wherein the Lethe of all others lies?

When my white queen of heaven's remoteness tires,

Herself against her other self conspires,  
Takes woman's nature, walks in mortal ways,

And finds in my remorse her beauty's praise?

Yet all would I renounce to dream again  
The dream in dreams fulfilled that made my pain,

My noble pain that heightened all my years

With crowns to win and prowess-breeding tears;

Nay, would that dream renounce once more to see

Her from her sky there looking down at me!

## VII

Goddess, reclimb thy heaven, and be once more

An inaccessible splendor to adore,

A faith, a hope of such transcendent worth  
As bred ennobling discontent with earth;

Give back the longing, back the elated mood

That, fed with thee, spurned every meaner good;

Give even the spur of impotent despair  
That, without hope, still bade aspire and dare;

Give back the need to worship, that still pours  
Down to the soul the virtue it adores!

Nay, brightest and most beautiful, deem naught

These frantic words, the reckless wind of thought:



Still stoop, still grant, — I live but in thy  
will;

Be what thou wilt, but be a woman still !  
Vainly I cried, nor could myself believe  
That what I prayed for I would fain re-  
ceive.

My moon is set; my vision set with her;  
No more can worship vain my pulses stir.  
Goddess Triform, I own thy triple spell,  
My heaven's queen, — queen, too, of my  
earth and hell !

## THE BLACK PREACHER

### A BRETON LEGEND

AT Carnac in Brittany, close on the bay,  
They show you a church, or rather the  
gray

Ribs of a dead one, left there to bleach  
With the wreck lying near on the crest of  
the beach,

Roofless and splintered with thunder-stone,  
'Mid lichen-blurred gravestones all alone;  
'T is the kind of ruin strange sights to  
see

That may have their teaching for you and  
me.

Something like this, then, my guide had to  
tell,

Perched on a saint cracked across when he  
fell;

But since I might chance give his meaning  
a wrench,

He talking his *patois* and I English-French,  
I'll put what he told me, preserving the  
tone,

In a rhymed prose that makes it half his,  
half my own.

An abbey-church stood here, once on a  
time,

Built as a death-bed atonement for crime:  
'T was for somebody's sins, I know not  
whose;

But sinners are plenty, and you can choose.  
Though a cloister now of the dusk-winged  
bat,

'T was rich enough once, and the brothers  
grew fat,

Looser in girdle and purpler in jowl,  
Singing good rest to the founder's lost soul.

But one day came Northmen, and lithe  
tongues of fire

Lapped up the chapter-house, licked off  
the spire,

And left all a rubbish-heap, black and  
dreary,

Where only the wind sings *miserere*.

No priest has kneeled since at the altar's  
foot,

Whose crannies are searched by the night-  
shade's root,

Nor sound of service is ever heard,  
Except from throat of the unclean bird,  
Hooting to unassoiled shapes as they pass  
In midnights unholy his witches' mass,  
Or shouting "Ho ! ho !" from the belfry  
high

As the Devil's sabbath-train whirls by.

But once a year, on the eve of All-Souls,  
Through these arches dishallowed the  
organ rolls,

Fingers long fleshless the bell-ropes work,  
The chimes peal muffled with sea-mists  
mirk,

The skeleton windows are traced anew  
On the baleful flicker of corpse-lights blue,  
And the ghosts must come, so the legend  
saith,

To a preaching of Reverend Doctor Death.

Abbots, monks, barons, and ladies fair  
Hear the dull summons and gather there:  
No rustle of silk now, no clink of mail,

Nor ever a one greets his church-mate  
pale;

No knight whispers love in the *châtelaine's*  
ear,

His next-door neighbor this five-hundred  
year;

No monk has a sleek *benedicite*  
For the great lord shadowy now as he;  
Nor needeth any to hold his breath,  
Lest he lose the least word of Doctor  
Death.

He chooses his text in the Book Divine,  
Tenth verse of the Preacher in chapter  
nine: —

"Whatsoever thy hand shall find thee to  
do,

That do with thy whole might, or thou  
shalt rue;

For no man is wealthy, or wise, or brave,

In that quencher of might-be's and would-be's, the grave.'

Bid by the Bridegroom, 'To-morrow,' ye said,

And To-morrow was digging a trench for your bed;

Ye said, 'God can wait; let us finish our wine;'

Ye had wearied Him, fools, and that last knock was mine !"

But I can't pretend to give you the sermon,

Or say if the tongue were French, Latin, or German;

Whatever he preached in, I give you my word

The meaning was easy to all that heard;  
Famous preachers there have been and be,  
But never was one so convincing as he;  
So blunt was never a begging friar,  
No Jesuit's tongue so barbed with fire,  
Cameronian never, nor Methodist,  
Wrung gall out of Scripture with such a twist.

And would you know who his hearers must be ?

I tell you just what my guide told me:  
Excellent teaching men have, day and night,

From two earnest friars, a black and a white,

The Dominican Death and the Carmelite Life;

And between these two there is never strife,

For each has his separate office and station,  
And each his own work in the congregation;

Whoso to the white brother deafens his ears,

And cannot be wrought on by blessings or tears,

Awake in his coffin must wait and wait,  
In that blackness of darkness that means  
*too late,*

And come once a year, when the ghost-bell tolls,

As till Doomsday it shall on the eve of All-Souls,

To hear Doctor Death, whose words smart with the brine

Of the Preacher, the tenth verse of chapter nine.

## ARCADIA REDIVIVA

I, WALKING the familiar street,  
While a crammed horse-car jingled  
through it,  
Was lifted from my prosy feet  
And in Arcadia ere I knew it.

Fresh sward for gravel soothed my tread,  
And shepherd's pipes my ear delighted;  
The riddle may be lightly read:  
I met two lovers newly plighted.

They murmured by in happy care,  
New plans for paradise devising,  
Just as the moon, with pensive stare,  
O'er Mistress Craigie's pines was rising.

Astarte, known nigh threescore years,  
Me to no speechless rapture urges;  
Them in Elysium she enspheres,  
Queen, from of old, of thaumaturges.

The railings put forth bud and bloom,  
The house-fronts all with myrtles twine  
them,  
And light-winged Loves in every room  
Make nests, and then with kisses line  
them.

O sweetness of untasted life !  
O dream, its own supreme fulfilment !  
O hours with all illusion rife,  
As ere the heart divined what ill meant !

"*Et ego,*" sighed I to myself,  
And strove some vain regrets to bridle,  
"Though now laid dusty on the shelf,  
Was hero once of such an idyl !

"An idyl ever newly sweet,  
Although since Adam's day recited,  
Whose measures time them to Love's feet,  
Whose sense is every ill required."

Maiden, if I may counsel, drain  
Each drop of this enchanted season,  
For even our honeymoons must wane,  
Convicted of green cheese by Reason.

And none will seem so safe from change,  
Nor in such skies benignant hover,  
As this, beneath whose witchery strange  
You tread on rose-leaves with your lover.

The glass unfilled all tastes can fit,  
 As round its brim Conjecture dances;  
 For not Mephisto's self hath wit  
 To draw such vintages as Fancy's.

When our pulse beats its minor key,  
 When play-time halves and school-time  
 doubles,  
 Age fills the cup with serious tea,  
 Which once Dame Clicquot starred with  
 bubbles.

"Fie, Mr. Graybeard! Is this wise?  
 Is this the moral of a poet,  
 Who, when the plant of Eden dies,  
 Is privileged once more to sow it?"

"That herb of clay-disdaining root,  
 From stars secreting what it feeds on,  
 Is burnt-out passion's slag and soot  
 Fit soil to strew its dainty seeds on?"

"Pray, why, if in Arcadia once,  
 Need one so soon forget the way  
 there?  
 Or why, once there, be such a dunce  
 As not contentedly to stay there?"

Dear child, 't was but a sorry jest,  
 And from my heart I hate the cynic  
 Who makes the Book of Life a nest  
 For comments staler than rabbinic.

If Love his simple spell but keep,  
 Life with ideal eyes to flatter,  
 The Grail itself were crockery cheap  
 To Every-day's communion-platter.

One Darby is to me well known,  
 Who, as the hearth between them blazes,  
 Sees the old moonlight shine on Joan,  
 And float her youthward in its hazes.

He rubs his spectacles, he stares, —  
 'T is the same face that witched him  
 early!  
 He gropes for his remaining hairs, —  
 Is this a fleece that feels so curly?"

"Good heavens! but now 't was winter  
 gray,  
 And I of years had more than plenty;  
 The almanac 's a fool! 'T is May!  
 Hang family Bibles! I am twenty!"

"Come, Joan, your arm; we'll walk the  
 room —

The lane, I mean — do you remember?  
 How confident the roses bloom,  
 As if it ne'er could be December!

"Nor more it shall, while in your eyes  
 My heart its summer heat recovers,  
 And you, howe'er your mirror lies,  
 Find your old beauty in your lover's."

## THE NEST

## MAY

WHEN oaken woods with buds are pink,  
 And new-come birds each morning sing,  
 When fickle May on Summer's brink  
 Pauses, and knows not which to fling,  
 Whether fresh bud and bloom again,  
 Or hoar-frost silvering hill and plain,

Then from the honeysuckle gray  
 The oriole with experienced quest  
 Twitches the fibrous bark away,  
 The cordage of his hammock-nest,  
 Cheering his labor with a note  
 Rich as the orange of his throat.

High o'er the loud and dusty road  
 The soft gray cup in safety swings,  
 To brim ere August with its load  
 Of downy breasts and throbbing wings,  
 O'er which the friendly elm-tree heaves  
 An emerald roof with sculptured eaves.

Below, the noisy World drags by  
 In the old way, because it must,  
 The bride with heartbreak in her eye,  
 The mourner following hated dust:  
 Thy duty, winged flame of Spring,  
 Is but to love, and fly, and sing.

Oh, happy life, to soar and sway  
 Above the life by mortals led,  
 Singing the merry months away,  
 Master, not slave of daily bread,  
 And, when the Autumn comes, to flee  
 Wherever sunshine beckons thee!

## PALINODE — DECEMBER

Like some lorn abbey now, the wood  
 Stands roofless in the bitter air;

In ruins on its floor is strewed  
 The carven foliage quaint and rare,  
 And homeless winds complain along  
 The columned choir once thrilled with song.

And thou, dear nest, whence joy and praise  
 The thankful oriole used to pour,  
 Swing'st empty while the north winds chase  
 Their snowy swarms from Labrador:  
 But, loyal to the happy past,  
 I love thee still for what thou wast.

Ah, when the Summer graces flee  
 From other nests more dear than thou,  
 And, where June crowded once, I see  
 Only bare trunk and disleaved bough;  
 When springs of life that gleamed and  
 gushed  
 Run chilled, and slower, and are hushed;

When our own branches, naked long,  
 The vacant nests of Spring betray,  
 Nurseries of passion, love, and song  
 That vanished as our year grew gray;  
 When Life drones o'er a tale twice told  
 O'er embers pleading with the cold, —

I'll trust, that, like the birds of Spring,  
 Our good goes not without repair,  
 But only flies to soar and sing  
 Far off in some diviner air,  
 Where we shall find it in the calms  
 Of that fair garden 'neath the palms.

#### A YOUTHFUL EXPERIMENT IN ENGLISH HEXAMETERS

##### IMPRESSIONS OF HOMER

SOMETIMES come pauses of calm, when the  
 rapt bard, holding his heart back,  
 Over his deep mind muses, as when o'er  
 awe-stricken ocean  
 Poises a heapt cloud luridly, ripening the  
 gale and the thunder;  
 Slow rolls onward the verse with a long  
 swell heaving and swinging,  
 Seeming to wait till, gradually wid'ning  
 from far-off horizons,  
 Piling the deeps up, heaping the glad-  
 hearted surges before it,  
 Gathers the thought as a strong wind  
 darkening and cresting the tumult.  
 Then every pause, every heave, each trough  
 in the waves, has its meaning;

Full-sailed, forth like a tall ship steadies  
 the theme, and around it,  
 Leaping beside it in glad strength, running  
 in wild glee beyond it,  
 Harmonies billow exulting and floating the  
 soul where it lists them,  
 Swaying the listener's fantasy hither and  
 thither like driftweed.

#### BIRTHDAY VERSES

##### WRITTEN IN A CHILD'S ALBUM

'T WAS sung of old in hut and hall  
 How once a king in evil hour  
 Hung musing o'er his castle wall,  
 And, lost in idle dreams, let fall  
 Into the sea his ring of power.

Then, let him sorrow as he might,  
 And pledge his daughter and his throne  
 To who restored the jewel bright,  
 The broken spell would ne'er unite;  
 The grim old ocean held its own.

Those awful powers on man that wait,  
 On man, the beggar or the king,  
 To hovel bare or hall of state  
 A magic ring that masters fate  
 With each succeeding birthday bring.

Therein are set four jewels rare:  
 Pearl winter, summer's ruby blaze,  
 Spring's emerald, and, than all more fair,  
 Fall's pensive opal, doomed to bear  
 A heart of fire bedreamed with haze.

To him the simple spell who knows  
 The spirits of the ring to sway,  
 Fresh power with every sunrise flows,  
 And royal pursuivants are those  
 That fly his mandates to obey.

But he that with a slackened will  
 Dreams of things past or things to be,  
 From him the charm is slipping still,  
 And drops, ere he suspect the ill,  
 Into the inexorable sea.

#### ESTRANGEMENT

THE path from me to you that led,  
 Untrodden long, with grass is grown,  
 Mute carpet that his lieges spread



Before the Prince Oblivion  
When he goes visiting the dead.

And who are they but who forget ?  
You, who my coming could surmise  
Ere any hint of me as yet  
Warned other ears and other eyes,  
See the path blurred without regret.

But when I trace its windings sweet  
With saddened steps, at every spot  
That feels the memory in my feet,  
Each grass-blade turns forget-me-not,  
Where murmuring bees your name repeat.

## PHŒBE

This poem was sent from London September 4, 1881, to Mr. Gilder for *The Century*. Its first form was in the main the same as this, but before the poem was published several changes and omissions were made. The interesting evolution of the final form may be seen in detail in the *Notes and Illustrations*.

ERE pales in Heaven the morning star,  
A bird, the loneliest of its kind,  
Hears Dawn's faint footfall from afar  
While all its mates are dumb and blind.

It is a wee sad-colored thing,  
As shy and secret as a maid,  
That, ere in choir the robins sing,  
Pipes its own name like one afraid.

It seems pain-prompted to repeat  
The story of some ancient ill,  
But *Phæbe!* *Phæbe!* sadly sweet  
Is all it says, and then is still.

It calls and listens. Earth and sky,  
Hushed by the pathos of its fate,  
Listen : no whisper of reply  
Comes from its doom-dissevered mate.

*Phæbe!* it calls and calls again,  
And Ovid, could he but have heard,  
Had hung a legendary pain  
About the memory of the bird ;

A pain articulate so long,  
In penance of some mouldered crime  
Whose ghost still flies the Furies' throng  
Down the waste solitudes of time.

Waif of the young World's wonder-hour,  
When gods found mortal maidens fair,  
And will malign was joined with power  
Love's kindly laws to overbear,

Like Progne, did it feel the stress  
And coil of the prevailing words  
Close round its being, and compress  
Man's ampler nature to a bird's ?

One only memory left of all  
The motley crowd of vanished scenes,  
Hers, and vain impulse to recall  
By repetition what it means.

*Phæbe!* is all it has to say  
In plaintive cadence o'er and o'er,  
Like children that have lost their way,  
And know their names, but nothing more.

Is it a type, since Nature's Lyre  
Vibrates to every note in man,  
Of that insatiable desire,  
Meant to be so since life began ?

I, in strange lands at gray of dawn,  
Wakeful, have heard that fruitless plaint  
Through Memory's chambers deep with-  
drawn  
Renew its iterations faint.

So nigh ! yet from remotest years  
It summons back its magic, rife  
With longings unappeased, and tears  
Drawn from the very source of life.

## DAS EWIG-WEIBLICHE

How was I worthy so divine a loss,  
Deepening my midnights, kindling all  
my morns ?  
Why waste such precious wood to make my  
cross,  
Such far-sought roses for my crown of  
thorns ?

And when she came, how earned I such a  
gift ?  
Why spend on me, a poor earth-delving  
mole,  
The fireside sweetnesss, the heavenward  
lift,  
The hourly mercy, of a woman's soul ?

Ah, did we know to give her all her right,  
 What wonders even in our poor clay  
 were done !  
 It is not Woman leaves us to our night,  
 But our brute earth that grovels from  
 her sun.

Our nobler cultured fields and gracious  
 domes  
 We whirl too oft from her who still  
 shines on  
 To light in vain our caves and clefts, the  
 homes  
 Of night-bird instincts pained till she be  
 gone.

Still must this body starve our souls with  
 shade ;  
 But when Death makes us what we were  
 before,  
 Then shall her sunshine all our depths  
 invade,  
 And not a shadow stain heaven's crystal  
 floor.

#### THE RECALL

COME back before the birds are flown,  
 Before the leaves desert the tree,  
 And, through the lonely alleys blown,  
 Whisper their vain regrets to me  
 Who drive before a blast more rude,  
 The plaything of my gusty mood,  
 In vain pursuing and pursued !

Nay, come although the boughs be bare,  
 Though snowflakes fledge the summer's  
 nest,  
 And in some far Ausonian air  
 The thrush, your minstrel, warm his breast.  
 Come, sunshine's treasurer, and bring  
 To doubting flowers their faith in spring,  
 To birds and me the need to sing !

#### ABSENCE

SLEEP is Death's image, — poets tell us so ;  
 But Absence is the bitter self of Death,  
 And, you away, Life's lips their red forego,  
 Parched in an air unfreshened by your  
 breath.

Light of those eyes that made the light of  
 mine,

Where shine you ? On what happier fields  
 and flowers ?  
 Heaven's lamps renew their lustre less  
 divine,  
 But only serve to count my darkened hours.

If with your presence went your image too,  
 That brain-born ghost my path would never  
 cross  
 Which meets me now where'er I once met  
 you,  
 Then vanishes, to multiply my loss.

#### MONNA LISA

SHE gave me all that woman can,  
 Nor her soul's nunnery forego,  
 A confidence that man to man  
 Without remorse can never show.

Rare art, that can the sense refine  
 Till not a pulse rebellious stirs,  
 And, since she never can be mine,  
 Makes it seem sweeter to be hers !

#### THE OPTIMIST

TURBID from London's noise and smoke,  
 Here I find air and quiet too:  
 Air filtered through the beech and oak,  
 Quiet by nothing harsher broke  
 Than wood-dove's meditative coo.

The Truce of God is here; the breeze  
 Sighs as men sigh relieved from care,  
 Or tilts as lightly in the trees  
 As might a robin: all is ease,  
 With pledge of ampler ease to spare.

Time, leaning on his scythe, forgets  
 To turn the hour-glass in his hand,  
 And all life's petty cares and frets,  
 Its teasing hopes and weak regrets,  
 Are still as that oblivious sand.

Repose fills all the generous space  
 Of undulant plain; the rook and crow  
 Hush; 't is as if a silent grace,  
 By Nature murmured, calmed the face  
 Of Heaven above and Earth below.

From past and future toils I rest,  
 One Sabbath pacifies my year;

I am the halcyon, this my nest;  
And all is safely for the best  
While the World's there and I am here.

So I turn tory for the nonce,  
And think the radical a bore,  
Who cannot see, thick-witted dunce,  
That what was good for people once  
Must be as good forevermore.

Sun, sink no deeper down the sky;  
Earth, never change this summer mood;  
Breeze, loiter thus forever by,  
Stir the dead leaf or let it lie;  
Since I am happy, all is good.

#### ON BURNING SOME OLD LETTERS

WITH what odorous woods and spices  
Spared for royal sacrifices,  
With what costly gums seld-seen,  
Hoarded to embalm a queen,  
With what frankincense and myrrh,  
Burn these precious parts of her,  
Full of life and light and sweetness  
As a summer day's completeness,  
Joy of sun and song of bird  
Running wild in every word,  
Full of all the superhuman  
Grace and winsomeness of woman?

O'er these leaves her wrist has slid,  
Thrilled with veins where fire is hid  
'Neath the skin's pellucid veil,  
Like the opal's passion pale;  
This her breath has sweetened; this  
Still seems trembling with the kiss  
She half-ventured on my name,  
Brow and cheek and throat aflame;  
Over all caressing lies  
Sunshine left there by her eyes;  
From them all an effluence rare  
With her nearness fills the air,  
Till the murmur I half-hear  
Of her light feet drawing near.

Rarest woods were coarse and rough,  
Sweetest spice not sweet enough,  
Too impure all earthly fire  
For this sacred funeral-pyre;  
These rich relics must suffice  
For their own dear sacrifice.

Seek we first an altar fit  
For such victims laid on it:  
It shall be this slab brought home  
In old happy days from Rome, —  
Lazuli, once blest to line  
Dian's inmost cell and shrine.  
Gently now I lay them there,  
Pure as Dian's forehead bare,  
Yet suffused with warmer hue,  
Such as only Latmos knew.

Fire I gather from the sun  
In a virgin lens: 't is done!  
Mount the flames, red, yellow, blue,  
As her moods were shining through,  
Of the moment's impulse born, —  
Moods of sweetness, playful scorn,  
Half defiance, half surrender,  
More than cruel, more than tender,  
Flouts, caresses, sunshine, shade,  
Gracious doublings of a maid  
Infinite in guileless art,  
Playing hide-seek with her heart.

On the altar now, alas,  
There they lie a crinkling mass,  
Writhing still, as if with grief  
Went the life from every leaf;  
Then (heart-breaking palimpsest!)  
Vanishing ere wholly guessed,  
Suddenly some lines flash back,  
Traced in lightning on the black,  
And confess, till now denied,  
All the fire they strove to hide.  
What they told me, sacred trust,  
Stays to glorify my dust,  
There to burn through dust and damp  
Like a mage's deathless lamp,  
While an atom of this frame  
Lasts to feed the dainty flame.

All is ashes now, but they  
In my soul are laid away,  
And their radiance round me hovers  
Soft as moonlight over lovers,  
Shutting her and me alone  
In dream-Edens of our own;  
First of lovers to invent  
Love, and teach men what it meant.

#### THE PROTEST

I COULD not bear to see those eyes  
On all with wasteful largess shine,

And that delight of welcome rise  
Like sunshine strained through amber wine,  
But that a glow from deeper skies,  
From conscious fountains more divine,  
Is (is it ?) mine.

Be beautiful to all mankind,  
As Nature fashioned thee to be;  
'T would anger me did all not find  
The sweet perfection that 's in thee:  
Yet keep one charm of charms behind, —  
Nay, thou 'rt so rich, keep two or three  
For (is it ?) me !

### THE PETITION

Oh, tell me less or tell me more,  
Soft eyes with mystery at the core,  
That always seem to meet my own  
Frankly as pansies fully grown,  
Yet waver still 'tween no and yes !

So swift to cavil and deny,  
Then parley with concessions shy,  
Dear eyes, that make their youth be mine  
And through my inmost shadows shine,  
Oh, tell me more or tell me less !

### FACT OR FANCY?

In town I hear, scarce wakened yet,  
My neighbor's clock behind the wall  
Record the day's increasing debt,  
And *Cuckoo! Cuckoo!* faintly call.

Our senses run in deepening grooves,  
Thrown out of which they lose their tact,  
And consciousness with effort moves  
From habit past to present fact.

So, in the country waked to-day,  
I hear, unwitting of the change,  
A cuckoo's throb from far away  
Begin to strike, nor think it strange.

The sound creates its wonted frame:  
My bed at home, the songster hid  
Behind the wainscoting, — all came  
As long association bid.

Then, half aroused, ere yet Sleep's mist  
From the mind's uplands furl away,  
To the familiar sound I list,  
Disputed for by Night and Day.

I count to learn how late it is,  
Until, arrived at thirty-four,  
I question, "What strange world is this  
Whose lavish hours would make me  
poor ?"

*Cuckoo! Cuckoo!* Still on it went,  
With hints of mockery in its tone;  
How could such hoards of time be spent  
By one poor mortal's wit alone ?

I have it ! Grant, ye kindly Powers,  
I from this spot may never stir,  
If only these uncounted hours  
May pass, and seem too short, with Her !

But who She is, her form and face,  
These to the world of dream belong;  
She moves through fancy's visioned space,  
Unbodied, like the cuckoo's song.

### AGRO-DOLCE

ONE kiss from all others prevents me,  
And sets all my pulses astir,  
And burns on my lips and torments me:  
'T is the kiss that I fain would give her.

One kiss for all others requites me,  
Although it is never to be,  
And sweetens my dreams and invites me:  
'T is the kiss that she dare not give me.

Ah, could it be mine, it were sweeter  
Than honey bees garner in dream,  
Though its bliss on my lips were fleeter  
Than a swallow's dip to the stream.

And yet, thus denied, it can never  
In the prose of life vanish away;  
O'er my lips it must hover forever,  
The sunshine and shade of my day.

### THE BROKEN TRYST

WALKING alone where we walked together,  
When June was breezy and blue,  
I watch in the gray autumnal weather  
The leaves fall inconstant as you.

If a dead leaf startle behind me,  
I think 't is your garment's hem,  
And, oh, where no memory could find me,  
Might I whirl away with them !



CASA SIN ALMA

RECUERDO DE MADRID

SILENCIOSO por la puerta  
Voy de su casa desierta  
Do siempre feliz entré,  
Y la encuentro en vano abierta  
Cual la boca de una muerta  
Después que el alma se fué.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

FOR THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL CHILDREN OF  
THE CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES

The Church of the Disciples in Boston was  
under the ministrations of the Reverend James  
Freeman Clarke.

"WHAT means this glory round our feet,"  
The Magi mused, "more bright than  
morn?"

And voices chanted clear and sweet,  
"To-day the Prince of Peace is born!"

"What means that star," the Shepherds  
said,

"That brightens through the rocky  
glen?"

And angels, answering overhead,  
Sang, "Peace on earth, good-will to  
men!"

'T is eighteen hundred years and more  
Since those sweet oracles were dumb;  
We wait for Him, like them of yore;  
Alas, He seems so slow to come!

But it was said, in words of gold  
No time or sorrow e'er shall dim,  
That little children might be bold  
In perfect trust to come to Him.

All round about our feet shall shine  
A light like that the wise men saw,  
If we our loving wills incline  
To that sweet Life which is the Law.

So shall we learn to understand  
The simple faith of shepherds then,  
And, clasping kindly hand in hand,  
Sing, "Peace on earth, good-will to  
men!"

And they who do their souls no wrong,  
But keep at eve the faith of morn,  
Shall daily hear the angel-song,  
"To-day the Prince of Peace is born!"

MY PORTRAIT GALLERY

Of round my hall of portraiture I gaze,  
By Memory reared, the artist wise and  
holy,  
From stainless quarries of deep-buried  
days.

There, as I muse in soothing melancholy,  
Your faces glow in more than mortal youth,  
Companions of my prime, now vanished  
wholly,

The loud, impetuous boy, the low-voiced  
maiden,

Now for the first time seen in flawless truth.  
Ah, never master that drew mortal breath  
Can match thy portraits, just and generous  
Death,

Whose brush with sweet regretful tints is  
laden!

Thou paintest that which struggled here  
below

Half understood, or understood for woe,  
And with a sweet forewarning

Mak'st round the sacred front an aureole  
glow

Woven of that light that rose on Easter  
morning.

PAOLO TO FRANCESCA

I WAS with thee in Heaven: I cannot tell  
If years or moments, so the sudden bliss,  
When first we found, then lost, us in a kiss,  
Abolished Time, abolished Earth and Hell,  
Left only Heaven. Then from our blue  
there fell

The dagger's flash, and did not fall amiss,  
For nothing now can rob my life of this,—  
That once with thee in Heaven, all else is  
well.

Us, undivided when man's vengeance came,  
God's half-forgives that doth not here  
divide;

And, were this bitter whirl-blast fanged  
with flame,

To me 't were summer, we being side by  
side:

This granted, I God's mercy will not blame,  
For, given thy nearness, nothing is denied.

## SONNET

## SCOTTISH BORDER

The following letter to Mr. Howells, then editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, in which this sonnet was printed, is a little out of proportion as a head-note to a poem of fourteen lines, but it is too characteristic and too indicative of Lowell's extreme solicitude over his verse to be omitted. "There was one verse in the *Border* sonnet which, when I came to copy it, worried me with its lack of just what I wanted. Only *one*? you will say. Yes, all; but never mind — this one *most*. Instead of

'Where the shy ballad could its leaves unfold'

read 'dared its blooms.' I had liefer 'cup,' but cup is already metaphoric when applied to flowers, and Bottom the Weaver would be sure to ask in one of the many journals he edits — 'How unfold a cup? Does he mean one of those pocket drinking-cups — leathern inconveniences that always *stick* when you try to unfold 'em?' Damn Bottom! We ought not to think of him, but then the Public is made up of him, and I wish him to know that I was thinking of a flower. Besides, the sonnet is, more than any other kind of verse, a deliberate composition, and 'susceptible of a high polish,' as the dendrologists say of the woods of certain trees. Or shall we say 'grew in secret bold'? I write both on the opposite leaf, that you may choose one to paste over and not get the credit of tinkering my rhymes.

dared its blooms  
grew in secret bold.

Perhaps, after all, it is the buzzing of that *b* in blooms and bold, answering his brother *b* in ballads that *b*-witched me, and merely changing 'could' to 'dared' is all that is wanted. The sentiment of this sonnet pleases me."

As sinks the sun behind yon alien hills  
Whose heather-purpled slopes, in glory  
    rolled,  
Flush all my thought with momentary  
    gold,  
What pang of vague regret my fancy  
    thrills?  
Here 't is enchanted ground the peasant  
    tills,  
Where the shy ballad dared its blooms un-  
    fold,  
And memory's glamour makes new sights  
    seem old,  
As when our life some vanished dream  
    fulfils.

Yet not to thee belong these painless tears,  
Land loved ere seen: before my darkened  
    eyes,  
From far beyond the waters and the years,  
Horizons mute that wait their poet rise;  
The stream before me fades and disappears,  
And in the Charles the western splendor  
    dies.

## SONNET

ON BEING ASKED FOR AN AUTOGRAPH  
IN VENICE

AMID these fragments of heroic days  
When thought met deed with mutual pas-  
    sion's leap,  
There sits a Fame whose silent trump makes  
    cheap  
What short-lived rumor of ourselves we  
    raise.  
They had far other estimate of praise  
Who stamped the signet of their souls so  
    deep  
In art and action, and whose memories  
    keep  
Their height like stars above our misty  
    ways:  
In this grave presence to record my name  
Something within me hangs the head and  
    shrinks.  
Dull were the soul without some joy in  
    fame;  
Yet here to claim remembrance were, me-  
    thinks,  
Like him who, in the desert's awful frame,  
Notches his cockney initials on the Sphinx.

## THE DANCING BEAR

FAR over Elf-land poets stretch their sway,  
And win their dearest crowns beyond the  
    goal  
Of their own conscious purpose; they con-  
    trol  
With gossamer threads wide-flown our  
    fancy's play,  
And so our action. On my walk to-day,  
A wallowing bear begged clumsily his toll,  
When straight a vision rose of Atta Troll,  
And scenes ideal witched mine eyes away.  
"Merci, *Mossieu!*" the astonished bear-  
    ward cried,  
Grateful for thrice his hope to me, the  
    slave

Of partial memory, seeing at his side  
 A bear immortal. The glad dole I gave  
 Was none of mine; poor Heine o'er the  
 wide  
 Atlantic welter stretched it from his grave.

## THE MAPLE

THE Maple puts her corals on in May,  
 While loitering frosts about the lowlands  
 cling,  
 To be in tune with what the robins sing,  
 Plastering new log-huts 'mid her branches  
 gray;  
 But when the Autumn southward turns  
 away,  
 Then in her veins burns most the blood of  
 Spring,  
 And every leaf, intensely blossoming,  
 Makes the year's sunset pale the set  
 day.  
 O Youth unprescient, were it only so  
 With trees you plant, and in whose shade  
 reclined,  
 Thinking their drifting blooms Fate's cold-  
 est snow,  
 You carve dear names upon the faithful  
 rind,  
 Nor in that vernal stem the cross fore-  
 know  
 That Age shall bear, silent, yet unre-  
 signed !

## NIGHTWATCHES

WHILE the slow clock, as they were miser's  
 gold,  
 Counts and recounts the mornward steps of  
 Time,  
 The darkness thrills with conscience of  
 each crime  
 By Death committed, daily grown more  
 bold.  
 Once more the list of all my wrongs is  
 told,  
 And ghostly hands stretch to me from my  
 prime  
 Helpless farewells, as from an alien clime;  
 For each new loss redoubles all the old.  
 This morn 't was May; the blossoms were  
 astrir  
 With southern wind; but now the boughs  
 are bent

With snow instead of birds, and all things  
 freeze.  
 How much of all my past is dumb with  
 her,  
 And of my future, too, for with her went  
 Half of that world I ever cared to please !

## DEATH OF QUEEN MERCEDES

In a letter to his daughter from Madrid, July 26, 1878, Lowell wrote of Queen Mercedes: "Anything more tragic than the circumstances of her death it would be hard to imagine. She was actually receiving extreme unction while the guns were firing in honor of her eighteenth birthday, and four days later we saw her dragged to her dreary tomb at the Escorial, followed by the coach and its eight white horses in which she had driven in triumph from the church to the palace on the day of her wedding. The poor brutes tossed their snowy plumes as haughtily now as then. Her death is really a great public loss. She was amiable, intelligent, and simple—not beautiful but *good-looking*—and was already becoming popular."

HERS all that Earth could promise or be-  
 stow,—  
 Youth, Beauty, Love, a crown, the beckon-  
 ing years,  
 Lids never wet, unless with joyous tears,  
 A life remote from every sordid woe,  
 And by a nation's swelled to lordlier flow.  
 What lurking-place, thought we, for doubts  
 or fears,  
 When, the day's swan, she swam along the  
 cheers  
 Of the Alcalá, five happy months ago ?  
 The guns were shouting Io Hymen then  
 That, on her birthday, now denounce her  
 doom;  
 The same white steeds that tossed their  
 scorn of men  
 To-day as proudly drag her to the tomb.  
 Grim jest of fate ! Yet who dare call it  
 blind,  
 Knowing what life is, what our human-  
 kind ?

## PRISON OF CERVANTES

SEAT of all woes ? Though Nature's firm  
 decree  
 The narrowing soul with narrowing dun-  
 geon bind,

Yet was his free of motion as the wind,  
And held both worlds, of spirit and sense,  
in fee.

In charmed communion with his dual mind  
He wandered Spain, himself both knight  
and hind,

Redressing wrongs he knew must ever be.  
His humor wise could see life's long de-  
ceit,

Man's baffled aims, nor therefore both de-  
spise;

His knightly nature could ill fortune greet  
Like an old friend. Whose ever such kind  
eyes

That pierced so deep, such scope, save his  
whose feet

By Avon ceased 'neath the same April's  
skies ?

#### TO A LADY PLAYING ON THE CITHERN

So dreamy-soft the notes, so far away  
They seem to fall, the horns of Oberon  
Blow their faint Hunt's-up from the good-  
time gone;

Or, on a morning of long-withered May,  
Larks tinkle unseen o'er Claudian arches  
gray,

That Romeward crawl from Dreamland;  
and anon

My fancy flings her cloak of Darkness on,  
To vanish from the dungeon of To-day.

In happier times and scenes I seem to  
be,

And, as her fingers flutter o'er the strings,  
The days return when I was young as she,  
And my fledged thoughts began to feel  
their wings

With all Heaven's blue before them:  
Memory

Or Music is it such enchantment sings ?

#### THE EYE'S TREASURY

GOLD of the reddening sunset, backward  
thrown

In largess on my tall paternal trees,  
Thou with false hope or fear didst never  
tease

His heart that hoards thee; nor is child-  
hood flown

From him whose life no fairer boon hath  
known

Than that what pleased him earliest still  
should please:

And who hath incomes safe from chance as  
these,

Gone in a moment, yet for life his own ?  
All other gold is slave of earthward laws;  
This to the deeps of ether takes its flight,  
And on the topmost leaves makes glorious  
pause

Of parting pathos ere it yield to night:  
So linger, as from me earth's light with-  
draws,

Dear touch of Nature, tremulously bright !

#### PESSIMOPTIMISM

YE little think what toil it was to build  
A world of men imperfect even as this,  
Where we conceive of Good by what we

miss.  
Of ill by that wherewith best days are  
filled;

A world whose every atom is self-willed,  
Whose corner-stone is propt on artifice,  
Whose joy is shorter-lived than woman's  
fear,

Whose wisdom hoarded is but to be  
spilled.

Yet this is better than a life of caves,  
Whose highest art was scratching on a  
bone,

Or chipping toilsome arrowheads of flint;  
Better, though doomed to hear while Cleon  
raves,

To see wit's want eterned in paint or  
stone,

And wade the drain-drenched shoals of  
daily print.

#### THE BRAKES

WHAT countless years and wealth of brain  
were spent

To bring us hither from our caves and  
huts,

And trace through pathless wilds the deep-  
worn ruts

Of faith and habit, by whose deep in-  
dent

Prudence may guide if genius be not lent,  
Genius, not always happy when it shuts  
Its ears against the plodder's ifs and  
buts,



Hoping in one rash leap to snatch the  
event.  
The couriers of the sun, whose hoofs of  
flame  
Consume morn's misty threshold, are exact  
As bankers' clerks, and all this star-poised  
frame,  
One swerve allowed, were with convulsion  
racked;  
This world were doomed, should Dulness  
fail, to tame  
Wit's feathered heels in the stern stocks of  
fact.

### A FOREBODING

WHAT were the whole void world, if thou  
wert dead,  
Whose briefest absence can eclipse my  
day,  
And make the hours that danced with  
Time away  
Drag their funereal steps with muffled  
head?  
Through thee, meseems, the <sup>st-v</sup>very rose is  
red,  
From thee the violet steals its breath in  
May,  
From thee draw life all things that grow  
not gray,  
And by thy force the happy stars are sped.  
Thou near, the hope of thee to overflow  
Fills all my earth and heaven, as when in  
Spring,  
Ere April come, the birds and blossoms  
know,  
And grasses brighten round her feet to  
cling;  
Nay, and this hope delights all nature so  
That the dumb turf I tread on seems to  
sing.

### III. FANCY

#### UNDER THE OCTOBER MAPLES

WHAT mean these banners spread,  
These paths with royal red  
So gaily carpeted?  
Comes there a prince to-day?  
Such footing were too fine  
For feet less argentine  
Than Dian's own or thine,  
Queen whom my tides obey.

Surely for thee are meant  
These hues so orient  
That with a sultan's tent  
Each tree invites the sun;  
Our Earth such homage pays,  
So decks her dusty ways,  
And keeps such holidays,  
For one and only one.

My brain shapes form and face,  
Throbs with the rhythmic grace  
And cadence of her pace  
To all fine instincts true;  
Her footsteps, as they pass,  
Than moonbeams over grass  
Fall lighter, — but, alas,  
More insubstantial too!

### LOVE'S CLOCK

#### A PASTORAL

#### DAPHNIS *waiting*

"O DRYAD feet,  
Be doubly fleet,  
Timed to my heart's expectant beat  
While I await her!  
'At four,' vowed she;  
'T is scarcely three,  
Yet by *my* time it seems to be  
A good hour later!"

#### CHLOE

"Bid me not stay!  
Hear reason, pray!  
'T is striking six! Sure never day  
Was short as this is!"

#### DAPHNIS

"Reason nor rhyme  
Is in the chime!  
It can't be five; I've scarce had time  
To beg two kisses!"

#### BOTH

"Early or late,  
When lovers wait,  
And Love's watch gains, if Time a gait  
So snail-like chooses,  
Why should his feet  
Become more fleet  
Than cowards' are, when lovers meet  
And Love's watch loses?"

## ELEANOR MAKES MACAROONS

LIGHT of triumph in her eyes,  
 Eleanor her apron ties;  
 As she pushes back her sleeves,  
 High resolve her bosom heaves.  
 Hasten, cook ! impel the fire  
 To the pace of her desire;  
 As you hope to save your soul,  
 Bring a virgin casserole,  
 Brightest bring of silver spoons, —  
 Eleanor makes macaroons !

Almond-blossoms, now adance  
 In the smile of Southern France,  
 Leave your sport with sun and breeze,  
 Think of duty, not of ease;  
 Fashion, 'neath their jerkins brown,  
 Kernels white as thistle-down,  
 Tiny cheeses made with cream  
 From the Galaxy's mid-stream,  
 Blanched in light of honeymoons, —  
 Eleanor makes macaroons !

Now for sugar, — nay, our plan  
 Tolerates no work of man.  
 Hurry, then, ye golden bees;  
 Fetch your clearest honey, please,  
 Garnered on a Yorkshire moor,  
 While the last larks sing and soar,  
 From the heather-blossoms sweet  
 Where sea-breeze and sunshine meet,  
 And the Augusts mask as Junes, —  
 Eleanor makes macaroons !

Next the pestle and mortar find,  
 Pure rock-crystal, — these to grind  
 Into paste more smooth than silk,  
 Whiter than the milkweed's milk:  
 Spread it on a rose-leaf, thus,  
 Cate to please Theocritus;  
 Then the fire with spices swell,  
 While, for her completer spell,  
 Mystic canticles she croons, —  
 Eleanor makes macaroons !

Perfect ! and all this to waste  
 On a graybeard's palsied taste !  
 Poets so their verses write,  
 Heap them full of life and light,  
 And then fling them to the rude  
 Mumbling of the multitude.

Not so dire her fate as theirs,  
 Since her friend this gift declares  
 Choicest of his birthday boons, —  
 Eleanor's dear macaroons !

*February 22, 1884.*

## TELEPATHY

“AND how could you dream of meet-  
 ing ?”

Nay, how can you ask me, sweet ?  
 All day my pulse had been beating  
 The tune of your coming feet.

And as nearer and ever nearer  
 I felt the throb of your tread,  
 To be in the world grew dearer,  
 And my blood ran rosier red.

Love called, and I could not linger,  
 But sought the forbidden tryst,  
 As music follows the finger  
 Of the dreaming lutanist.

And though you had said it and said it,  
 “We must not be happy to-day,”  
 Was I not wiser to credit  
 The fire in my feet than your Nay ?

## SCHERZO

WHEN the down is on the chin  
 And the gold-gleam in the hair,  
 When the birds their sweethearts win  
 And champagne is in the air,  
 Love is here, and Love is there,  
 Love is welcome everywhere.

Summer's cheek too soon turns thin,  
 Days grow briefer, sunshine rare;  
 Autumn from his cannekin  
 Blows the froth to chase Despair:  
 Love is met with frosty stare,  
 Cannot house 'neath branches bare.

When new life is in the leaf  
 And new red is in the rose,  
 Though Love's Maytime be as brief  
 As a dragon-fly's repose,  
 Never moments come like those,  
 Be they Heaven or Hell : who knows ?

All too soon comes Winter's grief,  
Spendthrift Love's false friends turn foes;  
Softly comes Old Age, the thief,  
Steals the rapture, leaves the throes:  
Love his mantle round him throws, —  
"Time to say Good-by; it snows."

"FRANCISCUS DE VERULAMIO  
SIC COGITAVIT"

THAT'S a rather bold speech, my Lord  
Bacon,  
For, indeed, is't so easy to know  
Just how much we from others have taken,  
And how much our own natural flow?

Since your mind bubbled up at its fountain,  
How many streams made it elate,  
While it calmed to the plain from the mountain,  
As every mind must that grows great?

While you thought 't was You thinking as newly  
As Adam still wet with God's dew,  
You forgot in your self-pride that truly  
The whole Past was thinking through you.

Greece, Rome, nay, your namesake, old Roger,  
With Truth's nameless delvers who wrought  
In the dark mines of Truth, helped to prod your  
Fine brain with the goad of their thought.

As mummy was prized for a rich hue  
The painter no elsewhere could find,  
So 't was buried men's thinking with which you  
Gave the ripe mellow tone to your mind.

I heard the proud strawberry saying,  
"Only look what a ruby I've made!"  
It forgot how the bees in their maying  
Had brought it the stuff for its trade.

And yet there's the half of a truth in it,  
And my Lord might his copyright sue;  
For a thought's his who kindles new youth in it,  
Or so puts it as makes it more true.

The birds but repeat without ending  
The same old traditional notes,  
Which some, by more happily blending,  
Seem to make over new in their throats;

And we men through our old bit of song run,  
Until one just improves on the rest,  
And we call a thing his, in the long run,  
Who utters it clearest and best.

### AUSPEX

MY heart, I cannot still it,  
Nest that had song-birds in it;  
And when the last shall go,  
The dreary days, to fill it,  
Instead of lark or linnet,  
Shall whirl dead leaves and snow.

Had they been swallows only,  
Without the passion stronger  
That skyward longs and sings, —  
Woe's me, I shall be lonely  
When I can feel no longer  
The impatience of their wings!

A moment, sweet delusion,  
Like birds the brown leaves hover;  
But it will not be long  
Before their wild confusion  
Fall wavering down to cover  
The poet and his song.

### THE PREGNANT COMMENT

OPENING one day a book of mine,  
I absent, Hester found a line  
Praised with a pencil-mark, and this  
She left transfigured with a kiss.

When next upon the page I chance,  
Like Poussin's nymphs my pulses dance,  
And whirl my fancy where it sees  
Pan piping 'neath Arcadian trees,  
Whose leaves no winter-scenes rehearse,  
Still young and glad as Homer's verse.  
"What mean," I ask, "these sudden joys?  
This feeling fresher than a boy's?  
What makes this line, familiar long,  
New as the first bird's April song?  
I could, with sense illumined thus,  
Clear doubtful texts in *Æschylus*!"

Laughing, one day she gave the key,  
 My riddle's open-sesame;  
 Then added, with a smile demure,  
 Whose downcast lids veiled triumph sure,  
 "If what I left there give you pain,  
 You — you — can take it off again;  
 'T was for *my* poet, not for him,  
 Your Doctor Donne there!"

Earth grew dim

And wavered in a golden mist,  
 As rose, not paper, leaves I kissed.  
 Donne, you forgive? I let you keep  
 Her precious comment, poet deep.

### THE LESSON

I SAT and watched the walls of night  
 With cracks of sudden lightning glow,  
 And listened while with clumsy might  
 The thunder wallowed to and fro.

The rain fell softly now; the squall,  
 That to a torrent drove the trees,  
 Had whirled beyond us to let fall  
 Its tumult on the whitening seas.

But still the lightning crinkled keen,  
 Or fluttered fitful from behind  
 The leaden drifts, then only seen,  
 That rumbled eastward on the wind.

Still as gloom followed after glare,  
 While bated breath the pine-trees drew,  
 Tiny Salmoneus of the air,  
 His mimic bolts the firefly threw.

He thought, no doubt, "Those flashes  
 grand,  
 That light for leagues the shuddering  
 sky,  
 Are made, a fool could understand,  
 By some superior kind of fly.

"He's of our race's elder branch,  
 His family-arms the same as ours,  
 Both born the twy-forked flame to launch,  
 Of kindred, if unequal, powers."

And is man wiser? Man who takes  
 His consciousness the law to be  
 Of all beyond his ken, and makes  
 God but a bigger kind of Me?

### SCIENCE AND POETRY

HE who first stretched his nerves of sub-  
 tile wire

Over the land and through the sea-depths  
 still,

Thought only of the flame-winged messen-  
 ger

As a dull drudge that should encircle earth  
 With sordid messages of Trade, and tame  
 Blithe Ariel to a bagman. But the Muse  
 Not long will be defrauded. From her foe  
 Her misused wand she snatches; at a touch,  
 The Age of Wonder is renewed again,  
 And to our disencharmed day restores  
 The Shoes of the Swiftuess that give odds to  
 Thought,

The Cloak that makes invisible; and with  
 these

I glide, an airy fire, from shore to shore,  
 Or from my Cambridge whisper to Cathay.

### A NEW YEAR'S GREETING

THE century numbers fourscore years;  
 You, fortified in your teens,  
 To Time's alarms close your ears,  
 And, while he devastates your peers,  
 Conceive not what he means.

If e'er life's winter fleck with snow  
 Your hair's deep shadowed bowers,  
 That winsome head an art would know  
 To make it charm, and wear it so  
 As 't were a wreath of flowers.

If to such fairies years must come,  
 May yours fall soft and slow  
 As, shaken by a bee's low hum,  
 The rose-leaves waver, sweetly dumb,  
 Down to their mates below!

### THE DISCOVERY

I WATCHED a moorland torrent run  
 Down through the rift itself had made,  
 Golden as honey in the sun,  
 Of darkest amber in the shade.

In this wild glen at last, methought,  
 The magic's secret I surprise;  
 Here Celia's guardian fairy caught  
 The changeful splendors of her eyes.



All else grows tame, the sky's one blue,  
 The one long languish of the rose,  
 But these, beyond prevision new,  
 Shall charm and startle to the close.

## WITH A SEASHELL

SHELL, whose lips, than mine more cold,  
 Might with Dian's ear make bold,  
 Seek my Lady's; if thou win  
 To that portal, shut from sin,  
 Where commissioned angels' swords  
 Startle back unholy words,  
 Thou a miracle shalt see  
 Wrought by it and wrought in thee;  
 Thou, the dumb one, shalt recover  
 Speech of poet, speech of lover.  
 If she deign to lift you there,  
 Murmur what I may not dare;  
 In that archway, pearly-pink  
 As the Dawn's untrodden brink,  
 Murmur, "Excellent and good,  
 Beauty's best in every mood,  
 Never common, never tame,  
 Changeful fair as windwaved flame" —  
 Nay, I maunder; this she hears  
 Every day with mocking ears,  
 With a brow not sudden-stained  
 With the flush of bliss restrained,  
 With no tremor of the pulse  
 More than feels the dreaming dulse  
 In the midmost ocean's caves,  
 When a tempest heaps the waves.  
 Thou must woo her in a phrase  
 Mystic as the opal's blaze,  
 Which pure maids alone can see  
 When their lovers constant be.  
 I with thee a secret share,  
 Half a hope, and half a prayer,  
 Though no reach of mortal skill  
 Ever told it all, or will;  
 Say, "He bids me — nothing more —  
 Tell you what you guessed before!"

## THE SECRET

I HAVE a fancy: how shall I bring it  
 Home to all mortals wherever they be?  
 Say it or sing it? Shoe it or wing it,  
 So it may outrun or outfly Me,  
 Merest cocoon-web whence it broke free?

Only one secret can save from disaster,  
 Only one magic is that of the Master:

Set it to music; give it a tune, —  
 Tune the brook sings you, tune the breeze  
 brings you,  
 Tune the wild columbines nod to in June!

This is the secret: so simple, you see!  
 Easy as loving, easy as kissing,  
 Easy as — well, let me ponder — as miss-  
 ing,  
 Known, since the world was, by scarce two  
 or three.

## IV. HUMOR AND SATIRE

## FITZ ADAM'S STORY

[The greater part of this poem was written many years ago as part of a larger one, to be called *The Nooning*, made up of tales in verse, some of them grave, some comic. It gives me a sad pleasure to remember that I was encouraged in this project by my friend the late Arthur Hugh Clough.]

Thus Lowell in the note which he prefixed to this poem when printing it in *Heartsease and Rue*. In his *Letters* are some more detailed references to the design of *The Nooning*. As far back as 1849, when issuing a new edition of his *Poems*, he wrote to Mr. Briggs: "My next volume, I think, will show an advance. It is to be called *The Nooning*. Now guess what it will be. The name suggests pleasant thoughts, does it not? But I shall not tell you anything about it yet, and you must not mention it." A little later he wrote to the same correspondent: "Maria invented the title for me, and is it not a pleasant one? My plan is this. I am going to bring together a party of half a dozen old friends at Elmwood. They go down to the river and bathe, and then one proposes that they shall go up into a great willow-tree (which stands at the end of the causeway near our house, and has seats in it) to take their nooning. There they agree that each shall tell a story or recite a poem of some sort. In the tree they find a countryman already resting himself, who enters into the plan and tells a humorous tale, with touches of Yankee character and habits in it. I am to read my poem of the Voyage of Leif to Vinland, in which I mean to bring my hero straight into Boston Bay, as befits a Bay-state poet. Two of my poems are already written — one *The Fountain of Youth* (no connection with any other firm), and the other an Address to the Muse, by the Transcendentalist of the party. . . . In *The Nooning* I shall have not

even a glance towards Reform." Apparently Lowell regarded the book as imminent, but the death of his daughter Rose early in 1850 and the subsequent journey to Europe seem to have deferred the execution of his plans, and the book, as we know, never had a whole, though there were several fragments of it published. He held tenaciously, however, to his plan. In June, 1853, he wrote again to Mr. Briggs: "I have *The Nooning* to finish — which shall turn out well;" and thirteen years later he wrote to Mr. Norton: "I have been working hard, and if my liver will let me alone, as it does now, am likely to go on all winter. And on *what*, do you suppose? I have taken up one of the unfinished tales of *The Nooning*, and it grew to a poem of near seven hundred lines! [plainly this poem of *Fitz Adam's Story*]. It is mainly descriptive. First, a sketch of the narrator, then his 'prelude,' then his 'tale.' I describe an old inn and its landlord, bar-room, etc. It is very homely, but right from nature. I have lent it to Child and hope he will like it, for if he does n't I shall feel discouraged. It was very interesting to take up a thread dropt so long ago, and curious as a phenomenon of memory to find how continuous it had remained in my mind, and how I could go on as if I had let it fall only yesterday."

A scheme so long persisted in and returned to so often could scarcely be wholly unknown, and in a letter to Professor James B. Thayer written in December, 1868, we find Lowell answering a query he had put: "And *The Nooning*. Sure enough, where is it? The *June Idyl* [renamed *Under the Willows*] (written in '51 or '52) is a part of what I had written as the induction to it. The description of spring in one of the *Biglow Papers* is another fragment of the same, tagged with rhyme for the nonce. So is a passage in *Mason and Slidell* beginning

'Oh, strange new world.'

The *Voyage to Vinland*, the *Pictures from Appledore*, and *Fitz Adam's Story* were written for *The Nooning*, as originally planned. So, you see, I had made some progress. Perhaps it will come by and by — not in the shape I meant at first, for something broke my life in two, and I cannot piece it together again. Besides, the Muse asks *all* of a man, and for many years I have been unable to give myself up as I would." *Fragments of an Unfinished Poem*, p. 158, is another bit of flotsam from *The Nooning*.

THE next whose fortune 't was a tale to tell

Was one whom men, before they thought,  
loved well,

And after thinking wondered why they did,  
For half he seemed to let them, half forbid,

And wrapped him so in humors, sheath on sheath,

'T was hard to guess the mellow soul beneath;

But, once divined, you took him to your heart,

While he appeared to bear with you as part

Of life's impertinence, and once a year  
Betrayed his true self by a smile or tear,  
Or rather something sweetly-shy and loath,  
Withdrawn ere fully shown, and mixed of both.

A cynic? Not precisely: one who thrust  
Against a heart too prone to love and trust,  
Who so despised false sentiment he knew  
Scarce in himself to part the false and true,

And strove to hide, by roughening-o'er the skin,

Those cobweb nerves he could not dull within.

Gentle by birth, but of a stem decayed,  
He shunned life's rivalries and hated trade;  
On a small patrimony and larger pride,  
He lived uneaseful on the Other Side  
(So he called Europe), only coming West  
To give his Old-World appetite new zest;  
Yet still the New World spooked it in his veins,

A ghost he could not lay with all his pains;  
For never Pilgrims' offshoot scapes control  
Of those old instincts that have shaped his soul.

A radical in thought, he puffed away  
With shrewd contempt the dust of usage gray,

Yet loathed democracy as one who saw,  
In what he longed to love, some vulgar flaw,

And, shocked through all his delicate reserves,

Remained a Tory by his taste and nerves.  
His fancy's thrall, he drew all ergoes thence,

And thought himself the type of common sense;

Misliking women, not from cross or whim,  
But that his mother shared too much in him,

And he half felt that what in them was  
grace

Made the unlucky weakness of his race.  
 What powers he had he hardly cared to  
 know,  
 But sauntered through the world as through  
 a show;  
 A critic fine in his haphazard way,  
 A sort of mild La Bruyère on half-pay.  
 For comic weaknesses he had an eye  
 Keen as an acid for an alkali,  
 Yet you could feel, through his sardonic  
 tone,  
 He loved them all, unless they were his  
 own.  
 You might have called him, with his hu-  
 morous twist,  
 A kind of human entomologist:  
 As these bring home, from every walk they  
 take,  
 Their hat-crowns stuck with bugs' of curi-  
 ous make,  
 So he filled all the lining of his head  
 With characters impaled and ticketed,  
 And had a cabinet behind his eyes  
 For all they caught of mortal oddities.  
 He might have been a poet—many  
 worse—  
 But that he had, or feigned, contempt of  
 verse;  
 Called it tattooing language, and held  
 rhymes  
 The young world's lullaby of ruder times.  
 Bitter in words, too indolent for gall,  
 He satirized himself the first of all,  
 In men and their affairs could find no law,  
 And was the ill logic that he thought he  
 saw.

Scratching a match to light his pipe  
 anew,  
 With eyes half shut some musing whiffs he  
 drew  
 And thus began: "I give you all my word,  
 I think this mock-Decameron absurd;  
 Boccaccio's garden! how bring that to pass  
 In our bleak clime save under double  
 glass?  
 The moral east-wind of New England life  
 Would snip its gay luxuriance like a knife;  
 Mile-deep the glaciers brooded here, they  
 say,  
 Through æons numb; we feel their chill  
 to-day.  
 These foreign plants are but half-hardy  
 still,  
 Die on a south, and on a north wall chill.

Had we stayed Puritans! *They* had some  
 heat,  
 (Though whence derived I have my own  
 conceit,)  
 But you have long ago raked up their fires;  
 Where they had faith, you've ten sham-  
 Gothic spires.  
 Why more exotics? Try your native  
 vines,  
 And in some thousand years you *may* have  
 wines;  
 Your present grapes are harsh, all pulps  
 and skins,  
 And want traditions of ancestral bins  
 That saved for evenings round the polished  
 board  
 Old lava-fires, the sun-steeped hillside's  
 board.  
 Without a Past, you lack that southern  
 wall  
 O'er which the vines of Poesy should  
 crawl;  
 Still they're your only hope; no midnight  
 oil  
 Makes up for virtue wanting in the soil;  
 Manure them well and prune them; 't  
 won't be France,  
 Nor Spain, nor Italy, but there's your  
 chance.  
 You have one story-teller worth a score  
 Of dead Boccaccios,—nay, add twenty  
 more,—  
 A hawthorn asking spring's most dainty  
 breath,  
 And him you're freezing pretty well to  
 death.  
 However, since you say so, I will tease  
 My memory to a story by degrees,  
 Though you will cry, 'Enough!' I'm well-  
 nigh sure,  
 Ere I have dreamed through half my over-  
 ture.  
 Stories were good for men who had no  
 books,  
 (Fortunate race!) and built their nests  
 like rooks  
 In lonely towers, to which the Jongleur  
 brought  
 His pedler's-box of cheap and tawdry  
 thought,  
 With here and there a fancy fit to see  
 Wrought in quaint grace in golden fli-  
 gree,—  
 Some ring that with the Muse's finger yet  
 Is warm, like Aucassin and Nicolette;

The morning newspaper has spoilt his  
trade,  
(For better or for worse, I leave unsaid,)  
And stories now, to suit a public nice,  
Must be half epigram, half pleasant vice.

"All tourists know Shebagog County:  
there

The summer idlers take their yearly stare,  
Dress to see Nature in a well-bred way,  
As 't were Italian opera, or play,  
Encore the sunrise (if they're out of bed),  
And pat the Mighty Mother on the head:  
These have I seen,—all things are good to  
see,—

And wondered much at their complacency.  
This world's great show, that took in get-  
ting-up

Millions of years, they finish ere they sup;  
Sights that God gleams through with soul-  
tingling force

They glance approvingly as things of  
course,

Say, 'That 's a grand rock,' 'This a pretty  
fall,'

Not thinking, 'Are we worthy?' What  
if all

The scornful landscape should turn round  
and say,

'This is a fool, and that a popinjay' ?  
I often wonder what the Mountain thinks  
Of French boots creaking o'er his breath-  
less brinks,

Or how the Sun would scare the chattering  
crowd,

If some fine day he chanced to think aloud.  
I, who love Nature much as sinners can,  
Love her where she most grandeur shows,  
—in man:

Here find I mountain, forest, cloud, and  
sun,

River and sea, and glows when day is done;  
Nay, where she makes grotesques, and  
moulds in jest

The clown's cheap clay, I find unfading  
zest.

The natural instincts year by year retire,  
As deer shrink northward from the settler's  
fire,

And he who loves the wild game-flavor  
more

Than city-feasts, where every man's a bore  
To every other man, must seek it where  
The steamer's throb and railway's iron  
blare

Have not yet startled with their punctual  
stir  
The shy, wood-wandering brood of Charac-  
ter.

"There is a village, once the county  
town,  
Through which the weekly mail rolled  
dustily down,

Where the courts sat, it may be, twice a  
year,

And the one tavern reeked with rustic  
cheer;

Cheeshogquesumscot erst, now Jethro  
bright,

Red-man and pale-face bore it equal spite.  
The railway ruined it, the natives say,  
That passed unwisely fifteen miles away,

And made a drain to which, with steady  
ooze,

Filtered away law, stage-coach, trade, and  
news.

The railway saved it; so at least think  
those

Who love old ways, old houses, old repose.  
Of course the Tavern stayed: its genial  
host

Thought not of flitting more than did the  
post

On which high-hung the fading signboard  
creaks,

Inscribed, 'The Eagle Inn, by Ezra  
Weeks.'

"If in life's journey you should ever  
find

An inn medicinal for body and mind,  
'T is sure to be some drowsy-looking house

Whose easy landlord has a bustling spouse:  
He, if he like you, will not long forego

Some bottle deep in cobwebbed dust laid  
low,

That, since the War we used to call the  
'Last,'

Has dozed and held its lang-syne memories  
fast:

From him exhales that Indian-summer air  
Of hazy, lazy welcome everywhere,

While with her toil the napery is white,  
The china dustless, the keen knife-blades

bright,  
Salt dry as sand, and bread that seems as  
though

'T were rather sea-foam baked than vulgar  
dough.



"In our swift country, houses trim and  
 white  
 Are pitched like tents, the lodging of a  
 night;  
 Each on its bank of baked turf mounted  
 high  
 Perches impatient o'er the roadside dry,  
 While the wronged landscape coldly stands  
 aloof,  
 Refusing friendship with the upstart roof.  
 Not so the Eagle; on a grass-green swell  
 That toward the south with sweet conces-  
 sions fell  
 It dwelt retired, and half had grown to be  
 As aboriginal as rock or tree.  
 It nestled close to earth, and seemed to  
 brood  
 O'er homely thoughts in a half-conscious  
 mood,  
 As by the peat that rather fades than burns  
 The smouldering grandam nods and knits  
 by turns,  
 Happy, although her newest news were old  
 Ere the first hostile drum at Concord  
 rolled.  
 If paint it e'er had known, it knew no more  
 Than yellow lichens spattered thickly o'er  
 That soft lead-gray, less dark beneath the  
 eaves  
 Which the slow brush of wind and weather  
 leaves.  
 The ample roof sloped backward to the  
 ground,  
 And vassal lean-tos gathered thickly round,  
 Patched on, as sire or son had felt the need,  
 Like chance growths sprouting from the  
 old roof's seed,  
 Just as about a yellow-pine-tree spring  
 Its rough-barked darlings in a filial ring.  
 But the great chimney was the central  
 thought  
 Whose gravitation through the cluster  
 wrought;  
 For 't is not styles far-fetched from Greece  
 or Rome,  
 But just the Fireside, that can make a  
 home;  
 None of your spindling things of modern  
 style,  
 Like pins stuck through to stay the card-  
 built pile,  
 It rose broad shouldered, kindly, debo-  
 nair,  
 Its warm breath whitening in the October  
 air,

While on its front a heart in outline showed  
 The place it filled in that serene abode.

"When first I chanced the Eagle to ex-  
 plore,

Ezra sat listless by the open door;  
 One chair careened him at an angle meet,  
 Another nursed his hugely-slippered feet;  
 Upon a third reposed a shirt-sleeved arm,  
 And the whole man diffused tobacco's  
 charm.

'Are you the landlord?' 'Wahl, I guess  
 I be,'

Watching the smoke, he answered leis-  
 urely.

He was a stoutish man, and through the  
 breast

Of his loose shirt there showed a brambly  
 chest;

Streaked redly as a wind-foreboding morn,  
 His tanned cheeks curved to temples closely  
 shorn;

Clean-shaved he was, save where a hedge  
 of gray

Upon his brawny throat leaned every way  
 About an Adam's-apple, that beneath  
 Bulged like a boulder from a brambly heath.  
 The Western World's true child and nurs-  
 ling he,

Equipt with aptitudes enough for three:  
 No eye like his to value horse or cow,  
 Or gauge the contents of a stack or mow;  
 He could foretell the weather at a word,  
 He knew the haunt of every beast and bird,  
 Or where a two-pound trout was sure to lie,  
 Waiting the flutter of his home-made fly;  
 Nay, once in autumns five, he had the  
 luck

To drop at fair-play range a ten-tined  
 buck;

Of sportsmen true he favored every whim,  
 But never cockney found a guide in him;  
 A natural man, with all his instincts fresh,  
 Not buzzing helpless in Reflection's mesh,  
 Firm on its feet stood his broad-shouldered  
 mind,

As bluffly honest as a northwest wind;  
 Hard-headed and soft-hearted, you'd scarce  
 meet

A kindlier mixture of the shrewd and  
 sweet;

Generous by birth, and ill at saying 'No,'  
 Yet in a bargain he was all men's foe,  
 Would yield no inch of vantage in a trade,  
 And give away ere nightfall all he made.

“Can I have lodging here?’ once more  
I said.

He blew a whiff, and, leaning back his  
head,

‘You come a piece through Bailey’s woods,  
I s’pose,

Acrost a bridge where a big swamp-oak  
grows?

It don’t grow, neither; it’s ben dead ten  
year,

Nor th’ ain’t a livin’ creetur, fur nor near,  
Can tell wut killed it; but I some misdoubt

’T was borers, there’s sech heaps on ’em  
about.

You did n’ chance to run ag’instant my son,  
A long, slab-sided youngster with a gun?

He’d oughto ben back more’n an hour  
ago,

An’ brought some birds to dress for supper  
— sho!

There he comes now. ‘Say, Obed, wut ye  
got?

(He’ll hev some upland plover like as not.)  
Wal, them’s real nice uns, an’ ll eat A 1,

Ef I can stop their bein’ over-done;  
Nothin’ riles *me* (I pledge my fastin’ word)

Like cookin’ out the natur’ of a bird;  
(Obed, you pick ’em out o’ sight an’ sound,

Your ma’am don’t love no feathers cluttrin’  
round;)

Jes’ scare ’em with the coals, — thet’s *my*  
idee.’

Then, turning suddenly about on me,  
‘Wal, Square, I guess so. Callilate to

stay?  
I’ll ask Mis’ Weeks; ’bout *thet* it’s hern to

say.’

“Well, there I lingered all October  
through,

In that sweet atmosphere of hazy blue,  
So leisurely, so soothing, so forgiving,

That sometimes makes New England fit  
for living.

I watched the landscape, erst so granite  
glum,

Bloom like the south side of a ripening  
plum,

And each rock-maple on the hillside make  
His ten days’ sunset doubled in the lake;

The very stone walls draggling up the hills  
Seemed touched, and wavered in their

roundhead wills.

Ah! there’s a deal of sugar in the sun!  
Tap me in Indian summer, I should run

A juice to make rock-candy of, — but then  
We get such weather scarce one year in  
ten.

“There was a parlor in the house, a room  
To make you shudder with its prudish  
gloom.

The furniture stood round with such an air,  
There seemed an old maid’s ghost in

every chair,  
Which looked as it had scuttled to its

place  
And pulled extempore a Sunday face,

Too smugly proper for a world of sin,  
Like boys on whom the minister comes in.

The table, fronting you with icy stare,  
Strove to look witless that its legs were

bare,  
While the black sofa with its horse-hair

pall  
Gloomed like a bier for Comfort’s funeral.

Each piece appeared to do its chilly best  
To seem an utter stranger to the rest,

As if acquaintanceship were deadly sin,  
Like Britons meeting in a foreign inn.

Two portraits graced the wall in grimmest  
truth,

Mister and Mistress W. in their youth, —  
New England youth, that seems a sort of

pill,  
Half wish-I-dared, half Edwards on the

Will,  
Bitter to swallow, and which leaves a trace

Of Calvinistic colic on the face.  
Between them, o’er the mantel, hung in

state  
Solomon’s temple, done in copperplate;

Invention pure, but meant, we may pre-  
sume,

To give some Scripture sanction to the  
room.

Facing this last, two samplers you might  
see,

Each, with its urn and stiffly-weeping tree,  
Devoted to some memory long ago

More faded than their lines of worsted woe;  
Cut paper decked their frames against the

flies,  
Though none e’er dared an entrance who

were wise,  
And bushed asparagus in fading green

Added its shiver to the franklin clean.

“When first arrived, I chilled a half-  
hour there,

Nor dared deflower with use a single chair;  
 I caught no cold, yet flying pains could find  
 For weeks in me, — a rheumatism of mind.  
 One thing alone imprisoned there had  
 power

To hold me in the place that long half-  
 hour:

A scutcheon this, a helm-surmounted shield,  
 Three griffins argent on a sable field;  
 A relic of the shipwrecked past was here,  
 And Ezra held some Old-World lumber  
 dear.

Nay, do not smile; I love this kind of thing,  
 These cooped traditions with a broken wing,  
 This freehold nook in Fancy's pipe-blown  
 ball,

This less than nothing that is more than  
 all!

Have I not seen sweet natures kept alive  
 Amid the humdrum of your business hive,  
 Undowered spinsters shielded from all  
 harms,

By airy incomes from a coat of arms?"

He paused a moment, and his features  
 took

The flitting sweetness of that inward look  
 I hinted at before; but, scarcely seen,  
 It shrank for shelter 'neath his harder mien,  
 And, rapping his black pipe of ashes clear,  
 He went on with a self-derisive sneer:

"No doubt we make a part of God's de-  
 sign,

And break the forest-path for feet divine;  
 To furnish foothold for this grand prevision  
 Is good, and yet — to be the mere transi-  
 tion,

That, you will say, is also good, though I  
 Scarce like to feed the ogre By-and-by.

Raw edges rasp my nerves; my taste is  
 wooed

By things that are, not going to be, good,  
 Though were I what I dreamed two lustres  
 gone,

I'd stay to help the Consummation on,  
 Whether a new Rome than the old more  
 fair,

Or a deadflat of rascal-ruled despair;  
 But *my* skull somehow never closed the  
 suture

That seems to knit yours firmly with the  
 future,

So you'll excuse me if I'm sometimes fain  
 To tie the Past's warm nightcap o'er my  
 brain;

I'm quite aware 'tis not in fashion here,  
 But then your northeast winds are *so*  
 severe!

"But to my story: though 'tis truly  
 naught

But a few hints in Memory's sketchbook  
 caught,

And which may claim a value on the score  
 Of calling back some scenery now no more.  
 Shall I confess? The tavern's only Lar  
 Seemed (be not shocked!) its homely-fea-  
 tured bar.

Here dozed a fire of beechen logs, that bred  
 Strange fancies in its embers golden-red,  
 And nursed the loggerhead whose hissing  
 dip,

Timed by nice instinct, creamed the mug  
 of flip

That made from mouth to mouth its genial  
 round,

Nor left one nature wholly winter-bound;  
 Hence dropt the tinkling coal all mellow-  
 ripe

For Uncle Reuben's talk-extinguished pipe;  
 Hence rayed the heat, as from an indoor  
 sun,

That wooed forth many a shoot of rustic  
 fun.

Here Ezra ruled as king by right divine;  
 No other face had such a wholesome shine,  
 No laugh like his so full of honest cheer;  
 Above the rest it crowed like Chanticleer.

"In this one room his dame you never  
 saw,

Where reigned by custom old a Salic law;  
 Here coatless lolled he on his throne of oak,  
 And every tongue paused midway if he  
 spoke.

Due mirth he loved, yet was his sway severe;  
 No blear-eyed driveller got his stagger  
 here;

'Measure was happiness; who wanted more,  
 Must buy his ruin at the Deacon's store;  
 None but his lodgers after ten could stay,  
 Nor after nine on eves of Sabbath-day.

He had his favorites and his pensioners,  
 The same that gypsy Nature owns for hers:  
 Loose-ended souls, whose skills bring scanty  
 gold,

And whom the poor-house catches when  
 they're old;

Rude country-minstrels, men who doctor  
 kine,

Or graft, and, out of scions ten, save nine;  
Creatures of genius they, but never meant  
To keep step with the civic regiment.  
These Ezra welcomed, feeling in his mind  
Perhaps some motions of the vagrant kind;  
These paid no money, yet for them he drew  
Special Jamaica from a tap they knew,  
And, for their feelings, chalked behind the  
door

With solemn face a visionary score.  
This thawed to life in Uncle Reuben's  
throat

A torpid shoal of jest and anecdote,  
Like those queer fish that doze the droughts  
away,

And wait for moisture, wrapped in sun-  
baked clay;

This warmed the one-eyed fiddler to his  
task,

Perched in the corner on an empty cask,  
By whose shrill art rapt suddenly, some  
boor

Rattled a double-shuffle on the floor;  
'Hull's Victory' was, indeed, the favorite  
air,

Though 'Yankee Doodle' claimed its  
proper share.

"T was there I caught from Uncle  
Reuben's lips,  
In dribbling monologue 'twixt whiffs and  
sips,

The story I so long have tried to tell;  
The humor coarse, the persons common, —  
well,

From Nature only do I love to paint,  
Whether she send a satyr or a saint;  
To me Sincerity's the one thing good,  
Soiled though she be and lost to maiden-  
hood.

Quompegan is a town some ten miles south  
From Jethro, at Nagumscot river-mouth,  
A seaport town, and makes its title good  
With lumber and dried fish and eastern  
wood.

Here Deacon Bitters dwelt and kept the  
Store,

The richest man for many a mile of shore;  
In little less than everything dealt he,  
From meeting-houses to a chest of tea;  
So dextrous therewithal a flint to skin,  
He could make profit on a single pin;  
In business strict, to bring the balance true  
He had been known to bite a fig in two,  
And change a board-nail for a shingle-nail.

All that he had he ready held for sale,  
His house, his tomb, whate'er the law allows,  
And he had gladly parted with his spouse.  
His one ambition still to get and get,  
He would arrest your very ghost for debt.  
His store looked righteous, should the Par-  
son come,

But in a dark back-room he peddled rum,  
And eased Ma'am Conscience, if she e'er  
would scold,

By christening it with water ere he sold.  
A small, dry man he was, who wore a queue,  
And one white neckcloth all the week-days  
through, —

On Monday white, by Saturday as dun  
As that worn homeward by the prodigal son.  
His frosted earlocks, striped with foxy  
brown,

Were braided up to hide a desert crown;  
His coat was brownish, black perhaps of  
yore;

In summer-time a banyan loose he wore;  
His trousers short, through many a season  
true,

Made no pretence to hide his stockings blue;  
A waistcoat buff his chief adornment was,  
Its porcelain buttons rimmed with dusky  
brass.

A deacon he, you saw it in each limb,  
And well he knew to deacon-off a hymn,  
Or lead the choir through all its wandering  
woes

With voice that gathered unction in his  
nose,

Wherein a constant snuffle you might hear,  
As if with him 't were winter all the year.  
At pew-head sat he with decorous pains,  
In sermon-time could foot his weekly gains,  
Or, with closed eyes and heaven-abstracted  
air,

Could plan a new investment in long-  
prayer.

A pious man, and thrifty too, he made  
The psalms and prophets partners in his  
trade,

And in his orthodoxy straitened more  
As it enlarged the business at his store;  
He honored Moses, but, when gain he  
planned,

Had his own notion of the Promised Land.

"Soon as the winter made the sledding  
good,  
From far around the farmers hauled him  
wood,



For all the trade had gathered 'neath his thumb.  
 He paid in groceries and New England rum,  
 Making two profits with a conscience clear, —  
 Cheap all he bought, and all he paid with dear.  
 With his own mete-wand measuring every load,  
 Each somehow had diminished on the road;  
 An honest cord in Jethro still would fail  
 By a good foot upon the Deacon's scale,  
 And, more to abate the price, his gimlet eye  
 Would pierce to cat-sticks that none else could spy;  
 Yet none dared grumble, for no farmer yet  
 But New Year found him in the Deacon's debt.

"While the first snow was mealy under feet,  
 A team drawled creaking down Quompegan street.  
 Two cords of oak weighed down the grinding sled,  
 And cornstalk fodder rustled overhead;  
 The oxen's muzzles, as they shouldered through,  
 Were silver-fringed; the driver's own was blue  
 As the coarse frock that swung below his knee.  
 Behind his load for shelter waded he;  
 His mittened hands now on his chest he beat,  
 Now stamped the stiffened cowhides of his feet,  
 Hushed as a ghost's; his armpit scarce could hold  
 The walnut whipstock slippery-bright with cold.  
 What wonder if, the tavern as he past,  
 He looked and longed, and stayed his beasts at last,  
 Who patient stood and veiled themselves in steam  
 While he explored the bar-room's ruddy gleam ?

"Before the fire, in want of thought profound,

There sat a brother-townsmen weather-bound:  
 A sturdy churl, crisp-headed, bristly-eared,  
 Red as a pepper; 'twixt coarse brows and beard  
 His eyes lay ambushed, on the watch for fools,  
 Clear, gray, and glittering like two bay-edged pools;  
 A shifty creature, with a turn for fun,  
 Could swap a poor horse for a better one, —  
 He 'd a high-stepper always in his stall;  
 Liked far and near, and dreaded there-withal.  
 To him the in-comer, 'Perez, how d' ye do ?'  
 'Jest as I 'm mind to, Obed; how do you ?'  
 Then, his eyes twinkling such swift gleams as run  
 Along the levelled barrel of a gun  
 Brought to his shoulder by a man you know  
 Will bring his game down, he continued, 'So,  
 I s'pose you're haulin' wood ? But you're too late;  
 The Deacon's off; Old Splitfoot could n't wait;  
 He made a bee-line las' night in the storm  
 To where he won't need wood to keep him warm.  
 'Fore this he's treasurer of a fund to train  
 Young imps as missionaries; hopes to gain  
 That way a contract that he has in view  
 For fireproof pitchforks of a pattern new.  
 It must have tickled him, all drawbacks weighed,  
 To think he stuck the Old One in a trade;  
 His soul, to start with, was n't worth a carrot,  
 And all he 'd left 'ould hardly serve to swear at.'

"By this time Obed had his wits thawed out,  
 And, looking at the other half in doubt,  
 Took off his fox-skin cap to scratch his head,  
 Donned it again, and drawled forth, 'Mean he's dead ?'  
 'Jesso; he's dead and t' other d that fol-lers

With folks that never love a thing but dollars.

He pulled up stakes last evening, fair and square,

And ever since there's been a row Down There.

The minute the old chap arrived, you see, Comes the Boss-devil to him, and says he,

"What are you good at? Little enough, I fear;

We callilate to make folks useful here."

"Well," says old Bitters, "I expect I can Scale a fair load of wood with e'er a man."

"Wood we don't deal in; but perhaps you'll suit,

Because we buy our brimstone by the foot: Here, take this measurin'-rod, as smooth as sin,

And keep a reckonin' of what loads comes in.

You'll not want business, for we need a lot

To keep the Yankees that you send us hot;

At firin' up they're barely half as spry As Spaniards or Italians, though they're dry;

At first we have to let the draught on stronger,

But, heat 'em through, they seem to hold it longer."

"Bitters he took the rod, and pretty soon

A teamster comes, whistling an ex-psalm tune.

A likelier chap you would n't ask to see, No different, but his limp, from you or me'—

'No different, Perez! Don't your memory fail?

Why, where in thunder was his horns and tail?'

'They're only worn by some old-fashioned pokes;

They mostly aim at looking just like folks. Sech things are scarce as queues and top-boots here;

'T would spoil their usefulness to look too queer.

Ef you could always know 'em when they come,

They'd get no purchase on you: now be mum.

On come the teamster, smart as Davy Crockett,

Jinglin' the red-hot coppers in his pocket, And clost behind, ('t was gold-dust, you'd ha' sworn.)

A load of sulphur yallow'er 'n seed-corn; To see it wasted as it is Down There Would make a Friction-Match Co. tear its hair!

"Hold on!" says Bitters, "stop right where you be;

You can't go in aabout a pass from me."

"All right," says t' other, "only step round smart;

I must be home by noon-time with the cart."

Bitters goes round it sharp-eyed as a rat, Then with a scrap of paper on his hat Pretends to cipher. "By the public staff, That load scarce rises twelve foot and a half."

"There's fourteen foot and over," says the driver,

"Worth twenty dollars, ef it's worth a stiver;

Good fourth-proof brimstone, that'll make 'em squirm,—

I leave it to the Headman of the Firm; After we masure it, we always lay Some on to allow for settlin' by the way. Imp and full-grown, I've carted sulphur here,

And gi'n fair satisfaction, thirty year."

With that they fell to quarrellin' so loud That in five minutes they had drawed a crowd,

And afore long the Boss, who heard the row,

Comes elbowin' in with "What's to pay here now?"

Both parties heard, the measurin'-rod he takes,

And of the load a careful survey makes. "Sence I have bossed the business here,"

says he,

"No fairer load was ever seen by me."

Then, turnin' to the Deacon, "You mean cus,

None of your old Quompegan tricks with us!

They won't do here: we're plain old-fashioned folks,

And don't quite understand that kind o' jokes.

I know this teamster, and his pa afore him,

And the hard-working Mrs. D. that bore him;

He would n't soil his conscience with a lie,  
Though he might get the custom-house  
thereby.

Here, constable, take Bitters by the queue,  
And clap him into furnace ninety-two,  
And try this brimstone on him; if he's  
bright,

He 'll find the measure honest afore night.  
He is n't worth his fuel, and I 'll bet  
The parish oven has to take him yet!"

"This is my tale, heard twenty years  
ago  
From Uncle Reuben, as the logs burned  
low,

Touching the walls and ceiling with that  
bloom

That makes a rose's calyx of a room.

I could not give his language, where-  
through ran

The gamy flavor of the bookless man  
Who shapes a word before the fancy cools,  
As lonely Crusoe improvised his tools.

I liked the tale, — 't was like so many told  
By Rutebeuf and his brother Trouvères  
bold;

Nor were the hearers much unlike to  
theirs,

Men unsophisticate, rude-nerved as bears.  
Ezra is gone and his large-hearted kind,  
The landlords of the hospitable mind;  
Good Warriner of Springfield was the last;  
An inn is now a vision of the past;  
One yet-surviving host my mind recalls, —  
You 'll find him if you go to Trenton  
Falls."

## THE ORIGIN OF DIDACTIC POETRY

WHEN wise Minerva still was young

And just the least romantic,  
Soon after from Jove's head she flung

That preternatural antic,

'T is said, to keep from idleness

Or flirting, those twin curses,

She spent her leisure, more or less,

In writing po——, no, verses.

How nice they were! to rhyme with *far*

A kind *star* did not tarry;

The metre, too, was regular

As schoolboy's dot and carry;

And full they were of pious plums,

So extra-super-moral, —

For sucking Virtue's tender gums

Most tooth-enticing coral.

A clean, fair copy she prepares,

Makes sure of moods and tenses,

With her own hand, — for prudence spares

A man-(or woman-)-uensis;

Complete, and tied with ribbons proud,

She hinted soon how cosy a

Treat it would be to read them loud

After next day's Ambrosia.

The Gods thought not it would amuse

So much as Homer's Odyssees,

But could not very well refuse

The properest of Goddesses;

So all sat round in attitudes

Of various dejection,

As with a *hem!* the queen of prudes

Began her grave prelection.

At the first pause Zeus said, "Well  
sung! —

I mean — ask Phœbus, — *he* knows."

Says Phœbus, "Zounds! a wolf's among

Admetus's merinos!

Fine! very fine! but I must go;

They stand in need of me there;

Excuse me!" snatched his stick, and so

Plunged down the gladdened ether.

With the next gap, Mars said, "For me

Don't wait, — naught could be finer,

But I 'm engaged at half past three, —

A fight in Asia Minor!"

Then Venus lisped, "I 'm sorely tried,

These duty-calls are vip'rous;

But I *must* go; I have a bride

To see about in Cyprus."

Then Bacchus, — "I must say good-by,

Although my peace it jeopard;

I meet a man at four, to try

A well-broke pair of leopards."

His words woke Hermes. "Ah!" he said,

"I *so* love moral theses!"

Then winked at Hebe, who turned red,

And smoothed her apron's creases.

Just then Zeus snored, — the Eagle drew

His head the wing from under;

Zeus snored, — o'er startled Greece there  
flew

The many-volumed thunder.  
 Some augurs counted nine, some, ten;  
 Some said 't was war, some, famine,  
 And all, that other-minded men  
 Would get a precious —.

Proud Pallas sighed, "It will not do;  
 Against the Muse I've sinned, oh!"  
 And her torn rhymes sent flying through  
 Olympus's back window.  
 Then, packing up a peplus clean,  
 She took the shortest path thence,  
 And opened, with a mind serene,  
 A Sunday-school in Athens.

The verses? Some in ocean swilled,  
 Killed every fish that bit to 'em;  
 Some Galen caught, and, when distilled,  
 Found morphine the residuum;  
 But some that rotted on the earth  
 Sprang up again in copies,  
 And gave two strong narcotics birth,  
 Didactic verse and poppies.

Years after, when a poet asked  
 The Goddess's opinion,  
 As one whose soul its wings had tasked  
 In Art's clear-aired dominion,  
 "Discriminate," she said, "betimes;  
 The Muse is unforgiving;  
 Put all your beauty in your rhymes,  
 Your morals in your living."

### THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

This poem appeared in *The Atlantic* for January, 1868, and Lowell's own criticism on it is frank. He wrote to Mr. Thayer: "You will find some verses of mine in the next *Atlantic*, the conception of which tickles me — but half spoiled (and in verse half is more than whole) in the writing;" and in a similar vein he wrote to Mr. Fields, the editor: "The trouble with *The Flying Dutchman* is not in what I left out, but in what I could n't get in. Let us be honest with each other, my dear Lorenzo de' Medici, if we can't be with anybody else. The conception of the verses is good; the verses are bad."

DON'T believe in the Flying Dutchman?  
 I've known the fellow for years;  
 My button I've wrenched from his clutch,  
 man:  
 I shudder whenever he nears!

He's a Rip van Winkle skipper,  
 A Wandering Jew of the sea,  
 Who sails his bedevilled old clipper  
 In the wind's eye, straight as a bee.

Back topsails! you can't escape him;  
 The man-ropes stretch with his weight,  
 And the queerest old toggeries drape him,  
 The Lord knows how long out of date!

Like a long-disembodied idea,  
 (A kind of ghost plentiful now,)  
 He stands there; you fancy you see a  
 Coeval of Teniers or Douw.

He greets you; would have you take letters:

You scan the addresses with dread,  
 While he mutters his *donners* and *wetters*, —  
 They're all from the dead to the dead!

You seem taking time for reflection,  
 But the heart fills your throat with a  
 jam,  
 As you spell in each faded direction  
 An ominous ending in *dam*.

Am I tagging my rhymes to a legend?  
 That were changing green turtle to  
 mock:  
 No, thank you! I've found out which  
 wedge-end  
 Is meant for the head of a block.

The fellow I have in my mind's eye  
 Plays the old Skipper's part here on  
 shore,  
 And sticks like a burr, till he finds I  
 Have got just the gauge of his bore.

This postman 'twixt one ghost and t' other,  
 With last dates that smell of the mould,  
 I have met him (O man and brother,  
 Forgive me!) in azure and gold.

In the pulpit I've known of his preaching,  
 Out of hearing behind the time,  
 Some statement of Balaam's impeaching,  
 Giving Eve a due sense of her crime.

I have seen him some poor ancient thrash-  
 ing  
 Into something (God save us!) more dry,  
 With the Water of Life itself washing  
 The life out of earth, sea, and sky.



O dread fellow-mortal, get newer  
 Despatches to carry, or none !  
 We're as quick as the Greek and the Jew  
     were  
 At knowing a loaf from a stone.

Till the couriers of God fail in duty,  
 We sha'n't ask a mummy for news,  
 Nor sate the soul's hunger for beauty  
 With your drawings from casts of a  
     Muse.

## CREDIDIMUS JOVEM REGNARE

O DAYS endeared to every Muse,  
 When nobody had any Views,  
 Nor, while the cloudscape of his mind  
 By every breeze was new designed,  
 Insisted all the world should see  
 Camels or whales where none there be !  
 O happy days, when men received  
 From sire to son what all believed,  
 And left the other world in bliss,  
 Too busy with bedevilling this !

Beset by doubts of every breed  
 In the last bastion of my creed,  
 With shot and shell for Sabbath-chime,  
 I watch the storming-party climb,  
 Panting (their prey in easy reach),  
 To pour triumphant through the breach  
 In walls that shed like snowflakes tons  
 Of missiles from old-fashioned guns,  
 But crumble 'neath the storm that pours  
 All day and night from bigger bores.  
 There, as I hopeless watch and wait  
 The last life-crushing coil of Fate,  
 Despair finds solace in the praise  
 Of those serene dawn-rosy days  
 Ere microscopes had made us heirs  
 To large estates of doubts and snares,  
 By proving that the title-deeds,  
 Once all-sufficient for men's needs,  
 Are palimpsests that scarce disguise  
 The tracings of still earlier lies,  
 Themselves as surely written o'er  
 An older fib erased before.

So from these days I fly to those  
 That in the landlocked Past repose,  
 Where no rude wind of doctrine shakes  
 From bloom-flushed boughs untimely  
     flakes;  
 Where morning's eyes see nothing strange,

No crude perplexity of change,  
 And morrows trip along their ways  
 Secure as happy yesterdays.  
 Then there were rulers who could trace  
 Through heroes up to gods their race,  
 Pledged to fair fame and noble use  
 By veins from Odin filled or Zeus,  
 And under bonds to keep divine  
 The praise of a celestial line.  
 Then priests could pile the altar's sods,  
 With whom gods spake as they with gods,  
 And everywhere from haunted earth  
 Broke springs of wonder, that had birth  
 In depths divine beyond the ken  
 And fatal scrutiny of men;  
 Then hills and groves and streams and  
     seas

Thrilled with immortal presences,  
 Not too ethereal for the scope  
 Of human passion's dream or hope.

Now Pan at last is surely dead,  
 And King No-Credit reigns instead,  
 Whose officers, morosely strict,  
 Poor Fancy's tenantry evict,  
 Chase the last Genius from the door,  
 And nothing dances any more.  
 Nothing? Ah, yes, our tables do,  
 Drumming the Old One's own tattoo,  
 And, if the oracles are dumb,  
 Have we not mediums? Why be glum?

Fly thither? Why, the very air  
 Is full of hindrance and despair!  
 Fly thither? But I cannot fly;  
 My doubts enmesh me if I try,  
 Each Liliputian, but, combined,  
 Potent a giant's limbs to bind.  
 This world and that are growing dark;  
 A huge interrogation mark,  
 The Devil's crook episcopal,  
 Still borne before him since the Fall,  
 Blackens with its ill-omened sign  
 The old blue heaven of faith benign.  
 Whence? Whither? Wherefore? How?  
     Which? Why?

All ask at once, all wait reply.  
 Men feel old systems cracking under 'em;  
 Life saddens to a mere conundrum  
 Which once Religion solved, but she  
 Has lost — has Science found? — the key.

What was snow-bearded Odin, trow,  
 The mighty hunter long ago,  
 Whose horn and hounds the peasant hears

Still when the Northlights shake their  
spears ?

Science hath answers twain, I've heard;  
Choose which you will, nor hope a third;  
Whichever box the truth be stowed in,  
There 's not a sliver left of Odin.  
Either he was a pinchbrowed thing,  
With scarcely wit a stone to fling,  
A creature both in size and shape  
Nearer than we are to the ape,  
Who hung sublime with brat and spouse  
By tail prehensile from the boughs,  
And, happier than his maimed descendants,  
The culture-curtailed independents,  
Could pluck his cherries with both paws,  
And stuff with both his big-boned jaws;  
Or else the core his name enveloped  
Was from a solar myth developed,  
Which, hunted to its primal shoot,  
Takes refuge in a Sanskrit root,  
Thereby to instant death explaining  
The little poetry remaining.

Try it with Zeus, 't is just the same;  
The thing evades, we hug a name;  
Nay, scarcely that, — perhaps a vapor  
Born of some atmospheric caper.  
All Lempriere's fables blur together  
In cloudy symbols of the weather,  
And Aphrodite rose from frothy seas  
But to illustrate such hypotheses.  
With years enough behind his back,  
Lincoln will take the selfsame track,  
And prove, hulled fairly to the cob,  
A mere vagary of Old Prob.  
Give the right man a solar myth,  
And he'll confute the sun therewith.

They make things admirably plain,  
But one hard question *will* remain:  
If one hypothesis you lose,  
Another in its place you choose,  
But, your faith gone, O man and brother,  
Whose shop shall furnish you another ?  
One that will wash, I mean, and wear,  
And wrap us warmly from despair ?  
While they are clearing up our puzzles,  
And clapping prophylactic muzzles  
On the Actæon's hounds that sniff  
Our devious track through But and If,  
Would they 'd explain away the Devil  
And other facts that won't keep level,  
But rise beneath our feet or fail,  
A reeling ship's deck in a gale !  
God vanished long ago, iwis,

A mere subjective synthesis;  
A doll, stuffed out with hopes and fears,  
Too homely for us pretty dears,  
Who want one that conviction carries,  
Last make of London or of Paris.  
He gone, I felt a moment's spasm,  
But calmed myself with Protoplasm,  
A finer name, and, what is more,  
As enigmatic as before;  
Greek, too, and sure to fill with ease  
Minds caught in the Symplegades  
Of soul and sense, life's two conditions,  
Each baffled with its own omniscience.  
The men who labor to revise  
Our Bibles will, I hope, be wise,  
And print it without foolish qualms  
Instead of God in David's psalms:  
Noll had been more effective far  
Could he have shouted at Dunbar,  
"Rise, Protoplasm ! " No dourest Scot  
Had waited for another shot.

And yet I frankly must confess  
A secret unforgivingness,  
And shudder at the saving chrism  
Whose best New Birth is Pessimism;  
My soul — I mean the bit of phosphorus  
That fills the place of what that was for  
us —

Can't bid its inward bores defiance  
With the new nursery-tales of science.  
What profits me, though doubt by doubt,  
As nail by nail, be driven out,  
When every new one, like the last,  
Still holds my coffin-lid as fast ?  
Would I find thought a moment's truce,  
Give me the young world's Mother Goose  
With life and joy in every limb,  
The chimney-corner tales of Grimm !

Our dear and admirable Huxley  
Cannot explain to me why ducks lay,  
Or, rather, how into their eggs  
Blunder potential wings and legs  
With will to move them and decide  
Whether in air or lymph to glide.  
Who gets a hair's-breadth on by showing  
That Something Else set all agoing ?  
Farther and farther back we push  
From Moses and his burning bush;  
Cry, "Art Thou there ? " Above, be-  
low,

All Nature mutters *yes* and *no* !  
'T is the old answer: we're agreed  
Being from Being must proceed,

Life be Life's source. I might as well  
 Obey the meeting-house's bell,  
 And listen while Old Hundred pours  
 Forth through the summer-opened doors,  
 From old and young. I hear it yet,  
 Swelled by bass-viol and clarinet,  
 While the gray minister, with face  
 Radiant, let loose his noble bass.  
 If Heaven it reached not, yet its roll  
 Waked all the echoes of the soul,  
 And in it many a life found wings  
 To soar away from sordid things.  
 Church gone and singers too, the song  
 Sings to me voiceless all night long,  
 Till my soul beckons me afar,  
 Glowing and trembling like a star.  
 Will any scientific touch  
 With my worn strings achieve as much ?

I don't object, not I, to know  
 My sires were monkeys, if 't was so;  
 I touch my ear's collusive tip  
 And own the poor-relationship.  
 That apes of various shapes and sizes  
 Contained their germs that all the prizes  
 Of senate, pulpit, camp, and bar win  
 May give us hopes that sweeten Darwin.  
 Who knows but from our loins may spring  
 (Long hence) some winged sweet-throated  
 thing

As much superior to us  
 As we to Cynocephalus ?

This is consoling, but, alas,  
 It wipes no dimness from the glass  
 Where I am flattening my poor nose,  
 In hope to see beyond my toes.  
 Though I accept my pedigree,  
 Yet where, pray tell me, is the key  
 That should unlock a private door  
 To the Great Mystery, such no more ?  
 Each offers his, but one nor all  
 Are much persuasive with the wall  
 That rises now, as long ago,  
 Between I wonder and I know,  
 Nor will vouchsafe a pin-hole peep  
 At the veiled Isis in its keep.  
 Where is no door, I but produce  
 My key to find it of no use.  
 Yet better keep it, after all,  
 Since Nature's economical,  
 And who can tell but some fine day  
 (If it occur to her) she may,  
 In her good-will to you and me,  
 Make door and lock to match the key ?

## TEMPORA MUTANTUR

This poem, written not long after Lowell's return from a journey in Europe and printed in *The Nation*, called out many angry retorts. The reader will find a vigorous letter by Lowell to Mr. Joel Benton, restating his position, in *The Century* for November, 1891, and reprinted in *Letters II.* 155-160.

THE world turns mild; democracy, they  
 say,  
 Rounds the sharp knobs of character away,  
 And no great harm, unless at grave ex-  
 pense  
 Of what needs edge of proof, the moral  
 sense;

For man or race is on the downward path  
 Whose fibre grows too soft for honest  
 wrath,

And there's a subtle influence that springs  
 From words to modify our sense of things.  
 A plain distinction grows obscure of late:  
 Man, if he will, may pardon; but the State  
 Forgets its function if not fixed as Fate.

So thought our sires: a hundred years  
 ago,

If men were knaves, why, people called  
 them so,

And crime could see the prison-portal  
 bend

Its brow severe at no long vista's end.

In those days for plain things plain words  
 would serve;

Men had not learned to admire the graceful  
 swerve

Wherewith the Æsthetic Nature's genial  
 mood

Makes public duty slope to private good;  
 No muddled conscience raised the saving  
 doubt;

A soldier proved unworthy was drummed  
 out,

An officer cashiered, a civil servant  
 (No matter though his piety were fervent)  
 Disgracefully dismissed, and through the  
 land

Each bore for life a stigma from the brand  
 Whose far-heard hiss made others more  
 averse

To take the facile step from bad to worse.  
 The Ten Commandments had a meaning  
 then,

Felt in their bones by least considerate  
 men,

Because behind them Public Conscience  
stood,  
And without wincing made their mandates  
good.  
But now that "Statesmanship" is just a  
way  
To dodge the primal curse and make it  
pay,  
Since office means a kind of patent drill  
To force an entrance to the Nation's till,  
And speculation something rather less  
Risky than if you spelt it with an s;  
Now that to steal by law is grown an art,  
Whom rogues the sires, their milder sons  
call smart,  
And "slightly irregular" dilutes the shame  
Of what had once a somewhat blunter  
name.  
With generous curve we draw the moral  
line:  
Our swindlers are permitted to resign;  
Their guilt is wrapped in deferential names,  
And twenty sympathize for one that blames.  
Add national disgrace to private crime,  
Confront mankind with brazen front sub-  
lime,  
Steal but enough, the world is unsevere, —  
Tweed is a statesman, Fisk a financier;  
Invent a mine, and be — the Lord knows  
what;  
Secure, at any rate, with what you've  
got.  
The public servant who has stolen or lied,  
If called on, may resign with honest pride:  
As unjust favor put him in, why doubt  
Disfavor as unjust has turned him out?  
Even if indicted, what is that but fudge  
To him who counted-in the elective judge?  
Whitewashed, he quits the politician's  
strife  
At ease in mind, with pockets filled for  
life:  
His "lady" glares with gems whose vul-  
gar blaze  
The poor man through his heightened taxes  
pays,  
Himself content if one huge Kohinoor  
Bulge from a shirt-front ampler than be-  
fore,  
But not too candid, lest it haply tend  
To rouse suspicion of the People's Friend.  
A public meeting, treated at his cost,  
Resolves him back more virtue than he  
lost;  
With character regilt he counts his gains;

What's gone was air, the solid good re-  
mains;  
For what is good, except what friend and  
foe  
Seem quite unanimous in thinking so,  
The stocks and bonds which, in our age of  
loans,  
Replace the stupid pagan's stocks and  
stones?  
With choker white, wherein no cynic eye  
Dares see idealized a hempen tie,  
At parish-meetings he conducts in prayer,  
And pays for missions to be sent else-  
where;  
On 'Change respected, to his friends en-  
deared,  
Add but a Sunday-school-class, he's re-  
vered,  
And his too early tomb will not be dumb  
To point a moral for our youth to come.

## IN THE HALF-WAY HOUSE

### I

At twenty we fancied the blest Middle  
Ages  
A spirited cross of romantic and grand,  
All templars and minstrels and ladies and  
pages,  
And love and adventure in Outre-Mer  
land;  
But ah, where the youth dreamed of build-  
ing a minster,  
The man takes a pew and sits reckoning  
his pelf,  
And the Graces wear fronts, the Muse  
thins to a spinster,  
When Middle-Age stares from one's  
glass at oneself!

### II

Do you twit me with days when I had an  
Ideal,  
And saw the sear future through spec-  
tacles green?  
Then find me some charm, while I look  
round and see all  
These fat friends of forty, shall keep me  
nineteen;  
Should we go on pining for chaplets of  
laurel  
Who've paid a perruquier for mending  
our thatch,



Or, our feet swathed in baize, with our  
Fate pick a quarrel,  
If, instead of cheap bay-leaves, she sent  
a dear scratch?

## III

We called it our Eden, that small patent-  
baker,  
When life was half moonshine and half  
Mary Jane;  
But the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-  
maker!—

Did Adam have duns and slip down a  
back-lane?  
Nay, after the Fall did the modiste keep  
coming

With last styles of fig-leaf to Madam  
Eve's bower?  
Did Jubal, or whoever taught the girls  
thrumming,  
Make the patriarchs deaf at a dollar the  
hour?

## IV

As I think what I was, I sigh *Desunt non-*  
*nulla!*

Years are creditors Sheridan's self could  
not bilk;  
But then, as my boy says, "What right has  
a fullah  
To ask for the cream, when himself spilt  
the milk?"

Perhaps when you're older, my lad, you'll  
discover

The secret with which Auld Lang Syne  
there is gilt,—  
Superstition of old man, maid, poet, and  
lover,—

That cream rises thickest on milk that  
was spilt!

## V

We sailed for the moon, but, in sad disil-  
lusion,

Snug under Point Comfort are glad to  
make fast,  
And strive (sans our glasses) to make a  
confusion

'Twixt our rind of green cheese and the  
moon of the past.

Ah, Might-have-been, Could-have-been,  
Would-have-been! rascals,

He's a genius or fool whom ye cheat at  
two-score,

And the man whose boy-promise was lik-  
ened to Pascal's  
Is thankful at forty they don't call him  
bore!

## VI

With what fumes of fame was each con-  
fident pate full!

How rates of insurance should rise on  
the Charles!

And which of us now would not feel wisely  
grateful,

If his rhymes sold as fast as the Em-  
blems of Quarles?

E'en if won, what's the good of Life's  
medals and prizes?

The rapture's in what never was or is  
gone;

That we missed them makes Helens of  
plain Ann Elizys,

For the goose of To-day still is Mem-  
ory's swan.

## VII

And yet who would change the old dream  
for new treasure?

Make not youth's sourest grapes the best  
wine of our life?

Need he reckon his date by the Almanac's  
measure

Who is twenty life-long in the eyes of  
his wife?

Ah, Fate, should I live to be nonagenarian,  
Let me still take Hope's frail I. O. U.'s

upon trust,  
Still talk of a trip to the Islands Macarian,

And still climb the dream-tree for—  
ashes and dust!

## AT THE BURNS CENTENNIAL

JANUARY, 1859

## I

A HUNDRED years! they're quickly fled,  
With all their joy and sorrow;

Their dead leaves shed upon the dead,  
Their fresh ones sprung by morrow!

And still the patient seasons bring  
Their change of sun and shadow;

New birds still sing with every spring,  
New violets spot the meadow.

## II

A hundred years ! and Nature's powers  
 No greater grown nor lessened !  
 They saw no flowers more sweet than  
     ours,  
 No fairer new moon's crescent.  
 Would she but treat us poets so,  
 So from our winter free us,  
 And set our slow old sap aflow  
 To sprout in fresh ideas !

## III

Alas, think I, what worth or parts  
 Have brought me here competing,  
 To speak what starts in myriad hearts  
 With Burns's memory beating !  
 Himself had loved a theme like this;  
 Must I be its entomber ?  
 No pen save his but 's sure to miss  
 Its pathos or its humor.

## IV

As I sat musing what to say,  
 And how my verse to number,  
 Some elf in play passed by that way,  
 And sank my lids in slumber;  
 And on my sleep a vision stole,  
 Which I will put in metre,  
 Of Burns's soul at the wicket-hole  
 Where sits the good Saint Peter.

## V

The saint, methought, had left his post  
 That day to Holy Willie,  
 Who swore, "Each ghost that comes shall  
     toast  
 In brunstane, will he, nill he;  
 There's nane need hope with phrases fine  
 Their score to wipe a sin frae;  
 I'll chalk a sign, to save their tryin',—  
 A hand (☞) and '*Vide infra* !'"

## VI

Alas ! no soil 's too cold or dry  
 For spiritual small potatoes,  
 Scrimped natures, spry the trade to ply  
 Of *diaboli advocatus*;  
 Who lay bent pins in the penance-stool  
 Where Mercy plumps a cushion,  
 Who 've just one rule for knave and fool,  
 It saves so much confusion !

## VII

So when Burns knocked, Will knit his  
     brows,  
 His window gap made scanter,  
 And said, "Go rouse the other house;  
 We lodge no Tam O'Shanter !"  
 "We lodge !" laughed Burns. "Now well  
     I see  
 Death cannot kill old nature;  
 No human flea but thinks that he  
 May speak for his Creator !

## VIII

"But, Willie, friend, don't turn me forth,  
 Auld Clottie needs no gauger;  
 And if on earth I had small worth,  
 You've let in worse I'se wager !"  
 "Na, nane has knockit at the yett  
 But found me hard as whunstane;  
 There's chances yet your bread to get  
 Wi Auld Nick, gaugin' brunstane."

## IX

Meanwhile, the Unco' Guid had ta'en  
 Their place to watch the process,  
 Flattening in vain on many a pane  
 Their disembodied noses.  
 Remember, please, 't is all a dream;  
 One can't control the fancies  
 Through sleep that stream with wayward  
     gleam,  
 Like midnight's boreal dances.

## X

Old Willie's tone grew sharp 's a knife:  
 "In *primis*, I indite ye,  
 For makin' strife wi' the water o' life,  
 And preferrin' *aqua vite* !"  
 Then roared a voice with lusty din,  
 Like a skipper's when 't is blowy,  
 "If *that*'s a sin, I'd ne'er got in,  
 As sure as my name 's Noah !"

## XI

Baulked, Willie turned another leaf,—  
 "There 's many here have heard ye,  
 To the pain and grief o' true belief,  
 Say hard things o' the clergy !"  
 Then rang a clear tone over all,—  
 "One plea for him allow me:  
 I once heard call from o'er me, 'Saul,  
 Why persecutest thou me ?'"

## XII

To the next charge vexed Willie turned,  
 And, sighing, wiped his glasses:  
 "I'm much concerned to find ye yearned  
 O'er-warmly tow'rd the lasses!"  
 Here David sighed; poor Willie's face  
 Lost all its self-possession:  
 "I leave this case to God's own grace;  
 It baffles *my* discretion!"

## XIII

Then sudden glory round me broke,  
 And low melodious surges  
 Of wings whose stroke to splendor woke  
 Creation's farthest verges;  
 A cross stretched, ladder-like, secure  
 From earth to heaven's own portal,  
 Whereby God's poor, with footing sure,  
 Climbed up to peace immortal.

## XIV

I heard a voice serene and low  
 (With my heart I seemed to hear it),  
 Fall soft and slow as snow on snow,  
 Like grace of the heavenly spirit;  
 As sweet as over new-born son  
 The croon of new-made mother,  
 The voice begun, "Sore tempted one!"  
 Then, pausing, sighed, "Our brother!"

## XV

"If not a sparrow fall, unless  
 The Father sees and knows it,  
 Think! recks He less his form express,  
 The soul his own deposit?  
 If only dear to Him the strong,  
 That never trip nor wander,  
 Where were the throng whose morning  
 song  
 Thrills his blue arches yonder?"

## XVI

"Do souls alone clear-eyed, strong-kneed,  
 To Him true service render,  
 And they who need his hand to lead,  
 Find they his heart untender?  
 Through all your various ranks and fates  
 He opens doors to duty,  
 And he that waits there at your gates  
 Was servant of his Beauty.

## XVII

"The Earth must richer sap secrete,  
 (Could ye in time but know it!)

Must juice concrete with fiercer heat,  
 Ere she can make her poet;  
 Long generations go and come,  
 At last she bears a singer,  
 For ages dumb of senses numb  
 The compensation-bringer!

## XVIII

"Her cheaper broods in palaces  
 She raises under glasses,  
 But souls like these, heav'n's hostages,  
 Spring shelterless as grasses:  
 They share Earth's blessing and her bane,  
 The common sun and shower;  
 What makes your pain to them is gain,  
 Your weakness is their power.

## XIX

"These larger hearts must feel the rolls  
 Of stormier-waved temptation;  
 These star-wide souls between their poles  
 Bear zones of tropic passion.  
 He loved much! — that is gospel good,  
 Howe'er the text you handle;  
 From common wood the cross was hewed,  
 By love turned priceless sandal.

## XX

"If scant his service at the kirk,  
 He *paters* heard and *aves*  
 From choirs that lurk in hedge and birk,  
 From blackbird and from mavis;  
 The cowering mouse, poor unroofed thing,  
 In him found Mercy's angel;  
 The daisy's ring brought every spring  
 To him Love's fresh evangel!

## XXI

"Not he the threatening texts who deals  
 Is highest 'mong the preachers,  
 But he who feels the woes and weals  
 Of all God's wandering creatures.  
 He doth good work whose heart can find  
 The spirit 'neath the letter;  
 Who makes his kind of happier mind,  
 Leaves wiser men and better.

## XXII

"They make Religion be abhorred  
 Who round with darkness gulf her,  
 And think no word can please the Lord  
 Unless it smell of sulphur.  
 Dear Poet-heart, that childlike guessed  
 The Father's loving kindness,

Come now to rest! Thou didst his  
hest,  
If haply 't was in blindness!"

## XXIII

Then leapt heaven's portals wide apart,  
And at their golden thunder  
With sudden start I woke, my heart  
Still throbbing-full of wonder.  
"Father," I said, "'t is known to Thee  
How Thou thy Saints preparest;  
But this I see, — Saint Charity  
Is still the first and fairest!"

## XXIV

Dear Bard and Brother! let who may  
Against thy faults be railing,  
(Though far, I pray, from us be they  
That never had a failing!)  
One toast I 'll give, and that not long,  
Which thou wouldst pledge if present, —  
To him whose song, in nature strong,  
Makes man of prince and peasant!

## IN AN ALBUM

THE misspelt scrawl, upon the wall  
By some Pompeian idler traced,  
In ashes packed (ironic fact!)  
Lies eighteen centuries uneffaced,  
While many a page of bard and sage,  
Deemed once mankind's immortal gain,  
Lost from Time's ark, leaves no more mark  
Than a keel's furrow through the main.

O Chance and Change! our buzz's range  
Is scarcely wider than a fly's;  
Then let us play at fame to-day,  
To-morrow be unknown and wise;  
And while the fair beg locks of hair,  
And autographs, and Lord knows what,  
Quick! let us scratch our moment's  
match,  
Make our brief blaze, and be forgot!

Too pressed to wait, upon her slate  
Fame writes a name or two in doubt;  
Scarcely written, these no longer please,  
And her own finger rubs them out:  
It may ensue, fair girl, that you  
Years hence this yellowing leaf may see,  
And put to task, your memory ask  
In vain, "This Lowell, who was he?"

AT THE COMMENCEMENT  
DINNER, 1866IN ACKNOWLEDGING A TOAST TO THE  
SMITH PROFESSOR

I RISE, Mr. Chairman, as both of us know,  
With the impromptu I promised you three  
weeks ago,  
Dragged up to my doom by your might  
and my mane,  
To do what I vowed I'd do never again;  
And I feel like your good honest dough  
when possess  
By a stirring, impertinent devil of yeast.  
"You must rise," says the leaven. "I  
can't," says the dough;  
"Just examine my bumps, and you'll see  
it's no go."  
"But you must," the tormentor insists,  
"'t is all right;  
You must rise when I bid you, and, what's  
more, be light."

'T is a dreadful oppression, this making  
men speak  
What they're sure to be sorry for all the  
next week;  
Some poor stick requesting, like Aaron's,  
to bud  
Into eloquence, pathos, or wit in cold blood,  
As if the dull brain that you vented your  
spite on  
Could be got, like an ox, by mere poking,  
to Brighton.

They say it is wholesome to rise with the  
sun,  
And I dare say it may be if not over-  
done;  
(I think it was Thomson who made the  
remark  
'T was an excellent thing in its way — for  
a lark;)   
But to rise after dinner and look down the  
meeting  
On a distant (as Gray calls it) prospect of  
Eating,  
With a stomach half full and a cerebrum  
hollow  
As the tortoise-shell ere it was strung for  
Apollo,  
Under contract to raise anerithmon gelasma



With rhymes so hard hunted they gasp with  
the asthma,  
And jokes not much younger than Jethro's  
phylacteries,  
Is something I leave you yourselves to  
characterize.

I've a notion, I think, of a good dinner  
speech,  
Tripping light as a sandpiper over the  
beach,

Swerving this way and that as the wave of  
the moment

Washes out its slight trace with a dash of  
whim's foam on 't,

And leaving on memory's rim just a sense  
Something graceful had gone by, a live  
present tense;

Not poetry,—no, not quite that, but as  
good,

A kind of winged prose that could fly if it  
would.

'T is a time for gay fancies as fleeting and  
vain

As the whisper of foam-beads on fresh-  
poured champagne,

Since dinners were not perhaps strictly  
designed

For manœuvring the heavy dragoons of the  
mind.

When I hear your set speeches that start  
with a pop,

Then wander and maunder, too feeble to  
stop,

With a vague apprehension from popular  
rumor

There used to be something by mortals  
called humor,

Beginning again when you thought they  
were done,

Respectable, sensible, weighing a ton,  
And as near to the present occasions of  
men

As a Fast Day discourse of the year eighteen  
ten,

I—well, I sit still, and my sentiments  
smother,

For am I not also a bore and a brother?

And a toast,—what should that be? Light,  
airy, and free,

The foam-Aphrodite of Bacchus's sea,  
A fancy-tinged bubble, an orb'd rainbow-  
stain,

That floats for an instant 'twixt goblet and  
brain;

A breath-born perfection, half something,  
half naught,

And breaks if it strike the hard edge of a  
thought.

Do you ask me to make such? Ah no,  
not so simple;

Ask Apelles to paint you the ravishing  
dimple

Whose shifting enchantment lights Venus's  
cheek,

And the artist will tell you his skill is to  
seek;

Once fix it, 't is naught, for the charm of  
it rises

From the sudden bopeeps of its smiling  
surprises.

I've tried to define it, but what mother's  
son

Could ever yet do what he knows should  
be done?

My rocket has burst, and I watch in the air  
Its fast-fading heart's-blood drop back in  
despair;

Yet one chance is left me, and, if I am  
quick,

I can palm off, before you suspect me, the  
stick.

Now since I've succeeded—I pray do not  
frown—

To Ticknor's and Longfellow's classical  
gown,

And profess four strange languages, which,  
luckless elf,

I speak like a native (of Cambridge) my-  
self,

Let me beg, Mr. President, leave to propose  
A sentiment treading on nobody's toes,

And give, in such ale as with pump-handles  
we brew,

Their memory who saved us from all talk-  
ing Hebrew,—

A toast that to deluge with water is good,  
For in Scripture they come in just after  
the flood:

I give you the men but for whom, as I  
guess, sir,

Modern languages ne'er could have had a  
professor,

The builders of Babel, to whose zeal the  
lungs

Of the children of men owe confusion of  
tongues;  
And a name all-embracing I couple there-  
with,  
Which is that of my founder—the late  
Mr. Smith.

## A PARABLE

AN ass munched thistles, while a nightin-  
gale  
From passion's fountain flooded all the  
vale.  
“Hee-haw!” cried he, “I hearken,” as  
who knew  
For such ear-largess humble thanks were  
due.  
“Friend,” said the winged pain, “in vain  
you bray,  
Who tunnels bring, not cisterns, for my  
lay;  
None but his peers the poet rightly hear,  
Nor mete we listeners by their length of  
ear.”

## V. EPIGRAMS

## SAYINGS

## 1.

IN life's small things be resolute and great  
To keep thy muscle trained: know'st thou  
when Fate  
Thy measure takes, or when she'll say to  
thee,  
“I find thee worthy; do this deed for me”?

## 2.

A camel-driver, angry with his drudge,  
Beating him, called him hunchback; to the  
hind  
Thus spake a dervish: “Friend, the Eternal  
Judge  
Dooms not his work, but ours, the crooked  
mind.”

## 3.

Swiftly the politic goes: is it dark?—he  
borrows a lantern;  
Slowly the statesman and sure, guiding his  
steps by the stars.

## 4.

“Where lies the capital, pilgrim, seat of  
who governs the Faithful?”  
“Thither my footsteps are bent: it is where  
Saadi is lodged.”

## INSCRIPTIONS

## FOR A BELL AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

I CALL as fly the irrevocable hours,  
Futile as air or strong as fate to make  
Your lives of sand or granite; awful  
powers,  
Even as men choose, they either give or  
take.

FOR A MEMORIAL WINDOW TO SIR WAL-  
TER RALEIGH, SET UP IN ST. MARGA-  
RET'S, WESTMINSTER, BY AMERICAN  
CONTRIBUTORS

THE New World's sons, from England's  
breasts we drew  
Such milk as bids remember whence we  
came;  
Proud of her Past, wherefrom our Present  
grew,  
This window we inscribe with Raleigh's  
name.

PROPOSED FOR A SOLDIERS' AND SAIL-  
ORS' MONUMENT IN BOSTON

To those who died for her on land and  
sea,  
That she might have a country great and  
free,  
Boston builds this: build ye her monument  
In lives like theirs, at duty's summons  
spent.

## A MISCONCEPTION

B, TAUGHT by Pope to do his good by  
stealth,  
'Twixt participle and noun no difference  
feeling,  
In office placed to serve the Commonwealth,  
Does himself all the good he can by steal-  
ing.

## THE BOSS

SKILLED to pull wires, he baffles Nature's  
hope,  
Who sure intended him to stretch a rope.

## SUN-WORSHIP

If I were the rose at your window,  
Happiest rose of its crew,  
Every blossom I bore would bend in-  
ward,  
*They'd* know where the sunshine grew.

## CHANGED PERSPECTIVE

FULL oft the pathway to her door  
I've measured by the selfsame track,  
Yet doubt the distance more and more,  
'Tis so much longer coming back!

WITH A PAIR OF GLOVES LOST  
IN A WAGER

We wagered, she for sunshine, I for rain,  
And I should hint sharp practice if I  
dared;  
For was not she beforehand sure to gain  
Whomade the sunshine we together shared?

## SIXTY-EIGHTH BIRTHDAY

As life runs on, the road grows strange  
With faces new, and near the end  
The milestones into headstones change,  
'Neath every one a friend.

## INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT

In vain we call old notions fudge,  
And bend our conscience to our dealing;  
The Ten Commandments will not budge,  
And stealing will continue stealing.

## LAST POEMS

THE following note was prefixed to this group when published in 1895: "This little volume contains those of the poems which Mr. Lowell wrote in his last years which, I believe,

he might have wished to preserve. Three of them were published before his death. Of the rest, two appear here for the first time. C. E. N."

HOW I CONSULTED THE ORACLE  
OF THE GOLDFISHES

WHAT know we of the world immense  
Beyond the narrow ring of sense?  
What should we know, who lounge about  
The house we dwell in, nor find out,  
Masked by a wall, the secret cell  
Where the soul's priests in hiding dwell?  
The winding stair that steals aloof  
To chapel-mysteries 'neath the roof?

It lies about us, yet as far  
From sense sequestered as a star  
New launched its wake of fire to trace  
In secresies of unprobed space,  
Whose beacon's lightning-pinioned spears  
Might earthward haste a thousand years  
Nor reach it. So remote seems this  
World undiscovered, yet it is  
A neighbor near and dumb as death,  
So near, we seem to feel the breath

Of its hushed habitants as they  
Pass us unchallenged, night and day.

Never could mortal ear nor eye  
By sound or sign suspect them nigh,  
Yet why may not some subtler sense  
Than those poor two give evidence?  
Transfuse the ferment of their being  
Into our own, past hearing, seeing,  
As men, if once attempered so,  
Far off each other's thought can know?  
As horses with an instant thrill  
Measure their rider's strength of will?  
Comes not to all some glimpse that brings  
Strange sense of sense-escaping things?  
Wraiths some transfigured nerve divines?  
Approaches, premonitions, signs,  
Voices of Ariel that die out  
In the dim No Man's Land of Doubt?

Are these Night's dusky birds? Are these  
Phantasmas of the silences

Outer or inner ? — rude heirlooms  
 From grovellers in the cavern-glooms,  
 Who in unhuman Nature saw  
 Misshapen foes with tusk and claw,  
 And with those night-fears brute and blind  
 Peopled the chaos of their mind,  
 Which, in ungovernable hours,  
 Still make their bestial lair in ours ?

Were they, or were they not ? Yes;  
 no;

Uncalled they come, unbid they go,  
 And leave us fumbling in a doubt  
 Whether within us or without  
 The spell of this illusion be  
 That witches us to hear and see  
 As in a twi-life what it will,  
 And hath such wonder-working skill  
 That what we deemed most solid-wrought  
 Turns a mere figment of our thought,  
 Which when we grasp at in despair  
 Our fingers find vain semblance there,  
 For Psyche seeks a corner-stone  
 Firmer than aught to matter known.

Is it illusion ? Dream-stuff ? Show  
 Made of the wish to have it so ?  
 'T were something, even though this were  
 all:

So the poor prisoner, on his wall  
 Long gazing, from the chance designs  
 Of crack, mould, weather-stain, refines  
 New and new pictures without cease,  
 Landscape, or saint, or altar-piece:  
 But these are Fancy's common brood  
 Hatched in the nest of solitude;  
 This is Dame Wish's hourly trade,  
 By our rude sires a goddess made.  
 Could longing, though its heart broke, give  
 Trances in which we chiefly live ?  
 Moments that darken all beside,  
 Tearfully radiant as a bride ?  
 Beckonings of bright escape, of wings  
 Purchased with loss of baser things ?  
 Blithe trunancies from all control  
 Of Hylë, outings of the soul ?

The worm, by trustful instinct led,  
 Draws from its womb a slender thread,  
 And drops, confiding that the breeze  
 Will waft it to unpastured trees:  
 So the brain spins itself, and so  
 Swings boldly off in hope to blow  
 Across some tree of knowledge, fair

With fruitage new, none else shall share:  
 Sated with wavering in the Void,  
 It backward climbs, so best employed,  
 And, where no proof is nor can be,  
 Seeks refuge with Analogy;  
 Truth's soft half-sister, she may tell  
 Where lurks, sold-sought, the other's well.  
 With metaphysic midges sore,  
 My Thought seeks comfort at her door,  
 And, at her feet a suppliant cast,  
 Evokes a spectre of the past.  
 Not such as shook the knees of Saul,  
 But winsome, golden-gay withal, —  
 Two fishes in a globe of glass,  
 That pass, and waver, and re-pass,  
 And lighten that way, and then this,  
 Silent as meditation is.

With a half-humorous smile I see  
 In this their aimless industry,  
 These errands nowhere and returns  
 Grave as a pair of funeral urns,  
 This ever-seek and never-find,  
 A mocking image of my mind.  
 But not for this I bade you climb  
 Up from the darkening deeps of time:  
 Help me to tame these wild day-mares  
 That sudden on me unawares.  
 Fish, do your duty, as did they  
 Of the Black Island far away  
 In life's safe places, — far as you  
 From all that now I see or do.  
 You come, embodied flames, as when  
 I knew you first, nor yet knew men;  
 Your gold renews my golden days,  
 Your splendor all my loss repays.

'T is more than sixty years ago  
 Since first I watched your to-and-fro;  
 Two generations come and gone  
 From silence to oblivion,  
 With all their noisy strife and stress  
 Lulled in the grave's forgivingness,  
 While you unquenchably survive  
 Immortal, almost more alive.  
 I watched you then a curious boy,  
 Who in your beauty found full joy,  
 And, by no problem-debts distressed,  
 Sate at life's board a welcome guest.  
 You were my sister's pets, not mine;  
 But Property's dividing line  
 No hint of dispossession drew  
 On any map my simplex knew;  
 O golden age, not yet dethroned!  
 What made me happy, that I owned;



You were my wonders, you my Lars,  
 In darkling days my sun and stars,  
 And over you entranced I hung,  
 Too young to know that I was young.  
 Gazing with still unsated bliss,  
 My fancies took some shape like this:  
 "I have my world, and so have you,  
 A tiny universe for two,  
 A bubble by the artist blown,  
 Scarcely more fragile than our own,  
 Where you have all a whale could wish,  
 Happy as Eden's primal fish.  
 Manna is dropt you thrice a day  
 From some kind heaven not far away,  
 And still you snatch its softening crumbs,  
 Nor, more than we, think whence it comes.  
 No toil seems yours but to explore  
 Your cloistered realm from shore to shore;  
 Sometimes you trace its limits round,  
 Sometimes its limpid depths you sound,  
 Or hover motionless midway,  
 Like gold-red clouds at set of day;  
 Erelong you whirl with sudden whim  
 Off to your globe's most distant rim,  
 Where, gretened by the watery lens,  
 Methinks no dragon of the fens  
 Flashed huger scales against the sky,  
 Roused by Sir Bevis or Sir Guy,  
 And the one eye that meets my view,  
 Lidless and strangely largening, too,  
 Like that of conscience in the dark,  
 Seems to make me its single mark.  
 What a benignant lot is yours  
 That have an own All-out-of-doors,  
 No words to spell, no sums to do,  
 No Nepos and no parlyvoo!  
 How happy you without a thought  
 Of such cross things as Must and Ought,—  
 I too the happiest of boys  
 To see and share your golden joys!"

So thought the child, in simpler words,  
 Of you his finny flocks and herds;  
 Now, an old man, I bid you rise  
 To the fine sight behind the eyes,  
 And, lo, you float and flash again  
 In the dark cistern of my brain.  
 But o'er your visioned flames I brood  
 With other mien, in other mood;  
 You are no longer there to please,  
 But to stir argument, and tease  
 My thought with all the ghostly shapes  
 From which no moody man escapes.

Diminished creature, I no more  
 Find Fairyland beside my door,  
 But for each moment's pleasure pay  
 With the *quart d'heure* of Rabelais!

I watch you in your crystal sphere,  
 And wonder if you see and hear  
 Those shapes and sounds that stir the wide  
 Conjecture of the world outside;  
 In your pent lives, as we in ours,  
 Have you surmises dim of powers,  
 Of presences obscurely shown,  
 Of lives a riddle to your own,  
 Just on the senses' outer verge,  
 Where sense-nerves into soul-nerves merge,  
 Where we conspire our own deceit  
 Confederate in deft Fancy's feat,  
 And the fooled brain befools the eyes  
 With pageants woven of its own lies?  
 But *are* they lies? Why more than those  
 Phantoms that startle your repose,  
 Half seen, half heard, then flit away,  
 And leave you your prose-bounded day?

The things ye see as shadows I  
 Know to be substance; tell me why  
 My visions, like those haunting you,  
 May not be as substantial too.  
 Alas, who ever answer heard  
 From fish, and dream-fish too? Absurd!  
 Your consciousness I half divine,  
 But you are wholly deaf to mine.  
 Go, I dismiss you; ye have done  
 All that ye could; our silk is spun:  
 Dive back into the deep of dreams,  
 Where what is real is what seems!  
 Yet I shall fancy till my grave  
 Your lives to mine a lesson gave;  
 If lesson none, an image, then,  
 Impeaching self-conceit in men  
 Who put their confidence alone  
 In what they call the Seen and Known.  
 How seen? How known? As through  
 your glass

Our wavering apparitions pass  
 Perplexingly, then subtly wrought  
 To some quite other thing by thought.  
 Here shall my resolution be:  
 The shadow of the mystery  
 Is haply wholesomer for eyes  
 That cheat us to be overwise,  
 And I am happy in my right  
 To love God's darkness as His light.

## TURNER'S OLD TÉMÉRAIRE

UNDER A FIGURE SYMBOLIZING THE  
CHURCH

THOU wast the fairest of all man-made  
things;  
The breath of heaven bore up thy cloudy  
wings,  
And, patient in their triple rank,  
The thunders crouched about thy flank,  
Their black lips silent with the doom of  
kings.

The storm-wind loved to rock him in thy  
pines,  
And swell thy vans with breath of great  
designs;  
Long-wildered pilgrims of the main  
By thee relaid their course again,  
Whose prow was guided by celestial signs.

How didst thou trample on tumultuous  
seas,  
Or, like some basking sea-beast stretched  
at ease,  
Let the bull-fronted surges glide  
Caressingly along thy side,  
Like glad hounds leaping by the hunts-  
man's knees !

Heroic feet, with fire of genius shod,  
In battle's ecstacy thy deck have trod,  
While from their touch a fulgor ran  
Through plank and spar, from man to  
man,  
Welding thee to a thunderbolt of God.

Now a black demon, belching fire and  
steam,  
Drags thee away, a pale, dismantled  
dream,  
And all thy desecrated bulk  
Must landlocked lie, a helpless hulk,  
To gather weeds in the regardless stream.

Woe's me, from Ocean's sky-horized  
air  
To this ! Better, the flame-cross still  
afire,  
Shot-shattered to have met thy doom  
Where thy last lightnings cheered the  
gloom,  
Than here be safe in dangerless despair.

Thy drooping symbol to the flagstaff  
clings,  
Thy rudder soothes the tide to lazy rings,  
Thy thunders now but birthdays greet,  
Thy planks forget the martyrs' feet,  
Thy masts what challenges the sea-wind  
brings.

Thou a mere hospital, where human  
wrecks,  
Like winter-flies, crawl those renown'd  
decks,  
Ne'er trodden save by captive foes,  
And wonted sternly to impose  
God's will and thine on bowed imperial  
necks !

Shall nevermore, engendered of thy fame,  
A new sea-eagle heir thy conqueror name,  
And with commissioned talons wrench  
From thy supplanter's grimy clench  
His sheath of steel, his wings of smoke  
and flame ?

This shall the pleased eyes of our children  
see;  
For this the stars of God long even as  
we;  
Earth listens for his wings; the Fates  
Expectant lean; Faith cross-propt waits,  
And the tired waves of Thought's insur-  
gent sea.

## ST. MICHAEL THE WEIGHER

STOOD the tall Archangel weighing  
All man's dreaming, doing, saying,  
All the failure and the pain,  
All the triumph and the gain,  
In the unimagined years,  
Full of hopes, more full of tears,  
Since old Adam's hopeless eyes  
Backward searched for Paradise,  
And, instead, the flame-blade saw  
Of inexorable Law.

Waking, I beheld him there,  
With his fire-gold, flickering hair,  
In his blinding armor stand,  
And the scales were in his hand:  
Mighty were they, and full well  
They could poise both heaven and hell.  
"Angel," asked I humbly then,  
"Weighest thou the souls of men ?

That thine office is, I know.”  
 “Nay,” he answered me, “not so;  
 But I weigh the hope of Man  
 Since the power of choice began,  
 In the world, of good or ill.”  
 Then I waited and was still.

In one scale I saw him place  
 All the glories of our race,  
 Cups that lit Belshazzar’s feast,  
 Gems, the lightning of the East,  
 Kublai’s sceptre, Cæsar’s sword,  
 Many a poet’s golden word,  
 Many a skill of science, vain  
 To make men as gods again.

In the other scale he threw  
 Things regardless, outcast, few,  
 Martyr-ash, arena sand,  
 Of St. Francis’ cord a strand,  
 Beechen cups of men whose need  
 Fasted that the poor might feed,  
 Disillusions and despairs  
 Of young saints with grief-grayed hairs,  
 Broken hearts that brake for Man.

Marvel through my pulses ran  
 Seeing then the beam divine  
 Swiftly on this hand decline,  
 While Earth’s splendor and renown  
 Mounted light as thistle-down.

## A VALENTINE

LET others wonder what fair face  
 Upon their path shall shine,  
 And, fancying half, half hoping, trace  
 Some maiden shape of tenderest grace  
 To be their Valentine.

Let other hearts with tremor sweet  
 One secret wish enshrine  
 That Fate may lead their happy feet  
 Fair Julia in the lane to meet  
 To be their Valentine.

But I, far happier, am secure;  
 I know the eyes benign,  
 The face more beautiful and pure  
 Than Fancy’s fairest portraiture  
 That mark my Valentine.

More than when first I singled thee,  
 This only prayer is mine,—

That, in the years I yet shall see,  
 As, darling, in the past, thou ’lt be  
 My happy Valentine.

## AN APRIL BIRTHDAY — AT SEA

ON this wild waste, where never blossom  
 came,  
 Save the white wind-flower in the billow’s  
 cap,  
 Or those pale disks of momentary flame,  
 Loose petals dropped from Dian’s care-  
 less lap,  
 What far fetched influence all my fancy  
 fills,  
 With singing birds and dancing daffo-  
 dils ?

Why, ’t is her day whom jocund April  
 brought,  
 And who brings April with her in her  
 eyes;  
 It is her vision lights my lonely thought,  
 Even as a rose that opes its hushed sur-  
 prise  
 In sick men’s chambers, with its glow-  
 ing breath  
 Plants Summer at the glacier edge of  
 Death.

Gray sky, sea gray as mossy stones on  
 graves;—  
 Anon comes April in her jollity;  
 And dancing down the bleak vales ’tween  
 the waves,  
 Makes them green glades for all her  
 flowers and me.  
 The gulls turn thrushes, charmed are  
 sea and sky  
 By magic of my thought, and know  
 not why.

Ah, but I know, for never April’s shine,  
 Nor passion gust of rain, nor all her  
 flowers  
 Scattered in haste, were seen so sudden  
 fine  
 As she in various mood, on whom the  
 powers  
 Of happiest stars in fair conjunction  
 smiled  
 To bless the birth of April’s darling  
 child.

## LOVE AND THOUGHT

WHAT hath Love with Thought to do ?  
Still at variance are the two.  
Love is sudden, Love is rash,  
Love is like the levin flash,  
Comes as swift, as swiftly goes,  
And his mark as surely knows.

Thought is lumpish, Thought is slow,  
Weighing long 'tween yes and no;  
When dear Love is dead and gone,  
Thought comes creeping in anon,  
And, in his deserted nest,  
Sits to hold the crowner's quest.

Since we love, what need to think ?  
Happiness stands on a brink  
Whence too easy 't is to fall  
Whither 's no return at all;  
Have a care, half-hearted lover,  
Thought would only push her over !

## THE NOBLER LOVER

If he be a nobler lover, take him !  
You in you I seek, and not myself;  
Love with men's what women choose to  
make him,

Seraph strong to soar, or fawn-eyed elf:  
All I am or can, your beauty gave it,  
Lifting me a moment nigh to you,  
And my bit of heaven, I fain would save  
it—

Mine I thought it was, I never knew.

What you take of me is yours to serve  
you,

All I give, you gave to me before;  
Let him win you ! If I but deserve you,  
I keep all you grant to him and more:  
You shall make me dare what others dare  
not,

You shall keep my nature pure as snow,  
And a light from you that others share  
not

Shall transfigure me where'er I go.

Let me be your thrall ! However lowly  
Be the bondsman's service I can do,  
Loyalty shall make it high and holy;  
Naught can be unworthy, done for you.

Men shall say, "A lover of this fashion  
Such an icy mistress well beseems."  
Women say, "Could we deserve such pas-  
sion,  
We might be the marvel that he dreams."

ON HEARING A SONATA OF  
BEETHOVEN'S PLAYED IN  
THE NEXT ROOM

UNSEEN Musician, thou art sure to please,  
For those same notes in happier days I  
heard  
Poured by dear hands that long have never  
stirred

Yet now again for me delight the keys:  
Ah me, to strong illusions such as these  
What are Life's solid things? The  
walls that gird  
Our senses, lo, a casual scent or word  
Levels, and 't is the soul that hears and  
sees !

Play on, dear girl, and many be the years  
Ere some grayhaired survivor sit like  
me

And, for thy largess pay a meed of tears  
Unto another who, beyond the sea  
Of Time and Change, perhaps not sadly  
hears

A music in this verse undreamed by  
thee !

## VERSES

INTENDED TO GO WITH A POSSET DISH  
TO MY DEAR LITTLE GODDAUGHTER,  
1882

It is of interest to know that the goddaugh-  
ter was a child of Leslie Stephen.

In good old times, which means, you know,  
The time men wasted long ago,  
And we must blame our brains or mood  
If that we squander seems less good,  
In those blest days when wish was act  
And fancy dreamed itself to fact,  
Godfathers used to fill with guineas  
The cups they gave their pickaninnies,  
Performing functions at the chrism  
Not mentioned in the Catechism.  
No millioner, poor I fill up  
With wishes my more modest cup,  
Though had I Amalthea's horn



It should be hers the newly born.  
 Nay, shudder not! I should bestow it  
 So brimming full she could n't blow it.  
 Wishes are n't horses: true, but still  
 There are worse roadsters than goodwill.  
 And so I wish my darling health,  
 And just to round my couplet, wealth,  
 With faith enough to bridge the chasm  
 'Twixt Genesis and Protoplasm,  
 And bear her o'er life's current vext  
 From this world to a better next,  
 Where the full glow of God puts out  
 Poor reason's farthing candle, Doubt.  
 I've wished her healthy, wealthy, wise,  
 What more can godfather devise?  
 But since there's room for countless wishes  
 In these old-fashioned posset dishes,  
 I'll wish her from my plenteous store  
 Of those commodities two more,  
 Her father's wit, veined through and  
 through  
 With tenderness that Watts (but whew!  
 Celia's aflame, I mean no stricture  
 On his Sir Josh-surpassing picture) —  
 I wish her next, and 't is the soul  
 Of all I've dropt into the bowl,  
 Her mother's beauty — nay, but two  
 So fair at once would never do.  
 Then let her but the half possess,  
 Troy was besieged ten years for less.  
 Now if there's any truth in Darwin,  
 And we from what was, all we are win,  
 I simply wish the child to be  
 A sample of Heredity,  
 Enjoying to the full extent  
 Life's best, the Unearned Increment  
 Which Fate her Godfather to flout  
 Gave *him* in legacies of gout.  
 Thus, then, the cup is duly filled;  
 Walk steady, dear, lest all be spilled.

## ON A BUST OF GENERAL GRANT

"This poem is the last, so far as is known, written by Mr. Lowell. He laid it aside for revision, leaving two of the verses incomplete. In a pencilled fragment of the poem the first verse appears as follows: —

'Strong, simple, silent, such are Nature's Laws.'

In the final copy, from which the poem is now printed, the verse originally stood: —

'Strong, steadfast, silent are the laws.'

but 'steadfast' is crossed out, and 'simple' written above.

"A similar change is made in the ninth verse of the stanza, where 'simpleness' is substituted for 'steadfastness.' The change from 'steadfast' to 'simple' was not made, probably through oversight, in the first verse of the second stanza. There is nothing to indicate what epithet Mr. Lowell would have chosen to complete the first verse of the third stanza. C. E. N."

STRONG, simple, silent are the [steadfast]  
 laws

That sway this universe, of none withstood,  
 Unconscious of man's outcries or applause,  
 Or what man deems his evil or his good;  
 And when the Fates ally them with a cause  
 That wallows in the sea-trough and seems  
 lost,

Drifting in danger of the reefs and sands  
 Of shallow counsels, this way, that way,  
 tost,

Strength, silence, simpleness, of these three  
 strands

They twist the cable shall the world hold  
 fast

To where its anchors clutch the bed-rock of  
 the Past.

Strong, simple, silent, therefore such was  
 he

Who helped us in our need; the eternal law  
 That who can saddle Opportunity  
 Is God's elect, though many a mortal flaw  
 May minish him in eyes that closely see,  
 Was verified in him: what need we say  
 Of one who made success where others  
 failed,

Who, with no light save that of common  
 day,

Struck hard, and still struck on till For-  
 tune quailed,

But that (so sift the Norns) a desperate  
 van

Ne'er fell at last to one who was not wholly  
 man.

A face all prose where Time's [benignant]  
 haze

Softens no raw edge yet, nor makes all fair  
 With the beguiling light of vanished days;  
 This is relentless granite, bleak and bare,  
 Roughhewn, and scornful of æsthetic  
 phrase;

Nothing is here for fancy, naught for  
 dreams,

The Present's hard uncompromising light

Accents all vulgar outlines, flaws, and  
 seams,  
 Yet vindicates some pristine natural right  
 O'ertopping that hereditary grace  
 Which marks the gain or loss of some time-  
 fondled race.

So Marius looked, methinks, and Crom-  
 well so,  
 Not in the purple born, to those they led  
 Nearer for that and costlier to the foe,  
 New moulders of old forms, by nature  
 bred

The exhaustless life of manhood's seeds to  
 show,

Let but the ploughshare of portentous  
 times

Strike deep enough to reach them where  
 they lie:

Despair and danger are their fostering  
 climes,

And their best sun bursts from a stormy  
 sky:

He was our man of men, nor would abate  
 The utmost due manhood could claim of  
 fate.

Nothing ideal, a plain-people's man  
 At the first glance, a more deliberate ken  
 Finds type primeval, theirs in whose veins  
 ran

Such blood as quelled the dragon in his  
 den,

Made harmless fields, and better worlds  
 began:

He came grim-silent, saw and did the deed  
 That was to do; in his master-grip  
 Our sword flashed joy; no skill of words  
 could breed

Such sure conviction as that close-clamped  
 lip;

He slew our dragon, nor, so seemed it,  
 knew

He had done more than any simplest man  
 might do.

Yet did this man, war-tempered, stern as  
 steel

Where steel opposed, prove soft in civil  
 sway;

The hand hilt-hardened had lost tact to  
 feel

The world's base coin, and glozing knaves  
 made prey

Of him and of the entrusted Commonweal;  
 So Truth insists and will not be denied.

We turn our eyes away, and so will Fame,  
 As if in his last battle he had died

Victor for us and spotless of all blame,  
 Doer of hopeless tasks which praters shirk,

One of those still plain men that do the  
 world's rough work.

## APPENDIX

### I. INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND SERIES OF BIGLOW PAPERS

[Lowell took occasion, when collecting in a book the several numbers of the second series of "Biglow Papers," which had appeared in the "Atlantic Monthly," to prefix an essay which not only gave a personal narrative of the origin of the whole scheme, but particularly dwelt upon the use in literature of the homely dialect in which the poems were couched. In this Cambridge Edition it has seemed expedient to print the Introduction here rather than in immediate connection with the poems themselves.]

THOUGH prefaces seem of late to have fallen under some reproach, they have at least this advantage, that they set us again on the feet of our personal consciousness and rescue us from the gregarious mock-modesty or cowardice of that *we* which shrills feebly throughout modern literature like the shrieking of mice in the walls of a house that has passed its prime. Having a few words to say to the many friends whom the "Biglow Papers" have won me, I shall accordingly take the freedom of the first person singular of the personal pronoun. Let each of the good-natured unknown who have cheered me by the written communication of their sympathy look upon this Introduction as a private letter to himself.

When, more than twenty years ago, I wrote the first of the series, I had no definite plan and no intention of ever writing another. Thinking the Mexican war, as I think it still, a national crime committed in behalf of Slavery, our common sin, and wishing to put the feeling of those who thought as I did in a way that would tell, I imagined to myself such an upcountry man as I had often seen at antislavery gatherings, capable of district-school English, but always instinctively falling back into the natural stronghold of his homely dialect when heated to the point of self-forgetfulness. When I began to carry out my conception and to write in my assumed character, I found myself in a strait between two perils. On the one hand, I was in danger of being carried beyond the limit of my own opinions, or at least of that temper with which every man should speak his mind in print, and on the other I feared the risk of seeming to vulgarize a deep and sacred conviction. I needed on occasion to rise above the level of mere *patois*, and for this purpose conceived the Rev. Mr. Wilbur, who should express the more cautious element of the New England character and its pedantry, as Mr.

Biglow should serve for its homely common-sense vivified and heated by conscience. The parson was to be the complement rather than the antithesis of his parishioner, and I felt or fancied a certain humorous element in the real identity of the two under a seeming incongruity. Mr. Wilbur's fondness for scraps of Latin, though drawn from the life, I adopted deliberately to heighten the contrast. Finding soon after that I needed some one as a mouth-piece of the mere drollery, for I conceive that true humor is never divorced from moral conviction, I invented Mr. Sawin for the clown of my little puppet-show. I meant to embody in him that half-conscious *unmorality* which I had noticed as the recoil in gross natures from a puritanism that still strove to keep in its creed the intense savor which had long gone out of its faith and life. In the three I thought I should find room enough to express, as it was my plan to do, the popular feeling and opinion of the time. For the names of two of my characters, since I have received some remonstrances from very worthy persons who happen to bear them, I would say that they were purely fortuitous, probably mere unconscious memories of sign-boards or directories. Mr. Sawin's sprang from the accident of a rhyme at the end of his first epistle, and I purposely christened him by the impossible surname of Birdofredum not more to stigmatize him as the incarnation of "Manifest Destiny," in other words, of national recklessness as to right and wrong, than to avoid the chance of wounding any private sensitiveness.

The success of my experiment soon began not only to astonish me, but to make me feel the responsibility of knowing that I held in my hand a weapon instead of the mere fencing-stick I had supposed. Very far from being a popular author under my own name, so far, indeed, as to be almost unread, I found the verses of my pseudonym copied everywhere; I saw them pinned up in workshops; I heard them quoted and their authorship debated; I once even, when rumor had at length caught up my name in one of its eddies, had the satisfaction of overhearing it demonstrated, in the pauses of a concert, that *I* was utterly incompetent to have written anything of the kind. I had read too much not to know the utter worthlessness of contemporary reputation, especially as regards satire, but I knew also that by giving a certain amount of influence it also had its worth, if that influence were used on the right side. I had learned, too, that the first requisite of good writing is to have an earnest and definite purpose, whether aesthetic

or moral, and that even good writing, to please long, must have more than an average amount either of imagination or common-sense. The first of these falls to the lot of scarcely one in several generations; the last is within the reach of many in every one that passes; and of this an author may fairly hope to become in part the mouthpiece. If I put on the cap and bells and made myself one of the court-fools of King Demos, it was less to make his majesty laugh than to win a passage to his royal ears for certain serious things which I had deeply at heart. I say this because there is no imputation that could be more galling to any man's self-respect than that of being a mere jester. I endeavored, by generalizing my satire, to give it what value I could beyond the passing moment and the immediate application. How far I have succeeded I cannot tell, but I have had better luck than I ever looked for in seeing my verses survive to pass beyond their nonage.

In choosing the Yankee dialect, I did not act without forethought. It had long seemed to me that the great vice of American writing and speaking was a studied want of simplicity, that we were in danger of coming to look on our mother-tongue as a dead language, to be sought in the grammar and dictionary rather than in the heart, and that our only chance of escape was by seeking it at its living sources among those who were, as Scottowe says of Major-General Gibbons, "divinely illiterate." President Lincoln, the only really great public man whom these latter days have seen, was great also in this, that he was master—witness his speech at Gettysburg—of a truly masculine English, classic, because it was of no special period, and level at once to the highest and lowest of his countrymen. I learn from the highest authority that his favorite reading was in Shakespeare and Milton, to which, of course, the Bible should be added. But whoever should read the debates in Congress might fancy himself present at a meeting of the city council of some city of Southern Gaul in the decline of the Empire, where barbarians with a Latin varnish emulated each other in being more than Ciceronian. Whether it be want of culture, for the highest outcome of that is simplicity, or for whatever reason, it is certain that very few American writers or speakers wield their native language with the directness, precision, and force that are common as the day in the mother country. We use it like Scotsmen, not as if it belonged to us, but as if we wished to prove that we belonged to it, by showing our intimacy with its written rather than with its spoken dialect. And yet all the while our popular idiom is racy with life and vigor and originality, buxsome (as Milton used the word) to our new occasions, and proves itself no mere graft by sending up new suckers from the old root in spite of us. It is only from its roots in the living generations of men that a language can be reinforced with fresh vigor for its needs; what may be called a literate dialect grows ever more and more pedantic and foreign, till it be-

comes at last as unfitting a vehicle for living thought as monkish Latin. That we should all be made to talk like books is the danger with which we are threatened by the Universal Schoolmaster, who does his best to enslave the minds and memories of his victims to what he esteems the best models of English composition, that is to say, to the writers whose style is faultily correct and has no blood-warmth in it. No language after it has faded into *diction*, none that cannot suck up the feeding juices secreted for it in the rich mother-earth of common folk, can bring forth a sound and lusty book. True vigor and heartiness of phrase do not pass from page to page, but from man to man, where the brain is kindled and the lips supplied by downright living interests and by passion in its very throes. Language is the soil of thought, and our own especially is a rich leaf-mould, the slow deposit of ages, the shed foliage of feeling, fancy, and imagination, which has suffered an earth-change, that the vocal forest, as Howell called it, may clothe itself anew with living green. There is death in the dictionary; and, where language is too strictly limited by convention, the ground for expression to grow in is limited also; and we get a *potted* literature, Chinese dwarfs instead of healthy trees.

But while the schoolmaster has been busy starching our language and smoothing it flat with the mangle of a supposed classical authority, the newspaper reporter has been doing even more harm by stretching and swelling it to suit his occasions. A dozen years ago I began a list, which I have added to from time to time, of some of the changes which may be fairly laid at his door. I give a few of them as showing their tendency, all the more dangerous that their effect, like that of some poisons, is insensibly cumulative, and that they are sure at last of effect among a people whose chief reading is the daily paper. I give in two columns the old style and its modern equivalent.

#### Old Style.

Was hanged.  
When the halter was put  
round his neck.

A great crowd came to see.

Great fire.  
The fire spread.

House burned.  
The fire was got under.

Man fell.  
A horse and wagon ran  
against.

The frightened horse.  
Sent for the doctor.

The mayor of the city in a  
short speech welcomed.

#### New Style.

Was launched into eternity.  
When the fatal noose was  
adjusted about the neck  
of the unfortunate victim  
of his own unbridled pas-  
sions.

A vast concourse was assem-  
bled to witness.

Disastrous conflagration.  
The conflagration extended  
its devastating career.

Edifice consumed.  
The progress of the devour-  
ing element was arrested.

Individual was precipitated.  
A valuable horse attached  
to a vehicle driven by J.  
S., in the employment of  
J. B., collided with.

The infuriated animal.  
Called into requisition the  
services of the family  
physician.

The chief magistrate of the  
metropolis, in well-chosen



I shall say a few words.

Began his answer.

Asked him to dine.

A bystander advised.

He died.

and eloquent language, frequently interrupted by the plaudits of the surging multitude, officially tendered the hospitalities.

I shall, with your permission, beg leave to offer some brief observations.

Commenced his rejoinder.

Tendered him a banquet.

One of those omnipresent characters who, as if in pursuance of some previous arrangement, are certain to be encountered in the vicinity when an accident occurs, ventured the suggestion.

He deceased, he passed out of existence, his spirit quitted its earthly habitation, winged its way to eternity, shook off its burden, etc.

In one sense this is nothing new. The school of Pope in verse ended by wire-drawing its phrase to such thinness that it could bear no weight of meaning whatever. Nor is fine writing by any means confined to America. All writers without imagination fall into it of necessity whenever they attempt the figurative. I take two examples from Mr. Merivale's "History of the Romans under the Empire," which, indeed, is full of such. "The last years of the age familiarly styled the Augustan were singularly barren of the literary glories from which its celebrity was chiefly derived. One by one the stars in its firmament had been lost to the world; Virgil and Horace, etc., had long since died; the charm which the imagination of Livy had thrown over the earlier annals of Rome had ceased to shine on the details of almost contemporary history; and if the flood of his eloquence still continued flowing, we can hardly suppose that the stream was as rapid, as fresh, and as clear as ever." I will not waste time in criticising the bad English or the mixture of metaphor in these sentences, but will simply cite another from the same author which is even worse. "The shadowy phantom of the Republic continued to flit before the eyes of the Cæsar. There was still, he apprehended, a germ of sentiment existing, on which a scion of his own house, or even a stranger, might boldly throw himself and raise the standard of patrician independence." Now a ghost may haunt a murderer, but hardly, I should think, to scare him with the threat of taking a new lease of its old tenement. And fancy the scion of a house in the act of throwing itself upon a germ of sentiment to raise a standard! I am glad, since we have so much in the same kind to answer for, that this bit of horticultural rhetoric is from beyond sea. I would not be supposed to condemn truly imaginative prose. There is a simplicity of splendor, no less than of plainness, and prose would be poor indeed if it could not find a tongue for that meaning of the mind which is behind the meaning of the words. It

has sometimes seemed to me that in England there was a growing tendency to curtail language into a mere convenience, and to defecate it of all emotion as thoroughly as algebraic signs. This has arisen, no doubt, in part from that healthy national contempt of humbug which is characteristic of Englishmen, in part from that sensitiveness to the ludicrous which makes them so shy of expressing feeling, but in part also, it is to be feared, from a growing distrust, one might almost say hatred, of whatever is super-material. There is something sad in the scorn with which their journalists treat the notion of there being such a thing as a national ideal, seeming utterly to have forgotten that even in the affairs of this world the imagination is as much matter-of-fact as the understanding. If we were to trust the impression made on us by some of the cleverest and most characteristic of their periodical literature, we should think England hopelessly stranded on the good-humored cynicism of well-to-do middle-age, and should fancy it an enchanted nation, doomed to sit forever with its feet under the mahogany in that after-dinner mood which follows conscientious repletion, and which it is ill-manners to disturb with any topics more exciting than the quality of the wines. But there are already symptoms that a large class of Englishmen are getting weary of the dominion of consols and divine common-sense, and to believe that eternal three per cent is not the chief end of man, nor the highest and only kind of interest to which the powers and opportunities of England are entitled.

The quality of exaggeration has often been remarked on as typical of American character, and especially of American humor. In Dr. Petri's *Gedrängtes Handbuch der Fremdwörter*, we are told that the word *humbug* is commonly used for the exaggerations of the North-Americans. To be sure, one would be tempted to think the dream of Columbus half fulfilled, and that Europe had found in the West a nearer way to Orientalism, at least in diction. But it seems to me that a great deal of what is set down as mere extravagance is more fitly to be called intensity and picturesqueness, symptoms of the imaginative faculty in full health and strength, though producing, as yet, only the raw and formless material in which poetry is to work. By and by, perhaps, the world will see it fashioned into poem and picture, and Europe, which will be hard pushed for originality ere long, may have to thank us for a new sensation. The French continue to find Shakespeare exaggerated because he treated English just as our country-folk do when they speak of a "steep price," or say that they "freeze to" a thing. The first postulate of an original literature is that a people should use their language instinctively and unconsciously, as if it were a lively part of their growth and personality, not as the mere torpid boon of education or inheritance. Even Burns contrived to write very poor verse and prose in English. Vulgarisms are often only

poetry in the egg. The late Mr. Horace Mann, in one of his public addresses, commented at some length on the beauty and moral significance of the French phrase *s'orienter*, and called on his young friends to practise upon it in life. There was not a Yankee in his audience whose problem had not always been to find out what was *about east*, and to shape his course accordingly. This charm which a familiar expression gains by being commented, as it were, and set in a new light by a foreign language, is curious and instructive. I cannot help thinking that Mr. Matthew Arnold forgets this a little too much sometimes when he writes of the beauties of French style. It would not be hard to find in the works of French Academicians phrases as coarse as those he cites from Burke, only they are veiled by the unfamiliarity of the language. But, however this may be, it is certain that poets and peasants please us in the same way by translating words back again to their primal freshness, and infusing them with a delightful strangeness which is anything but alienation. What, for example, is Milton's "*edge of battle*" but a doing into English of the Latin *acies*? *Was die Gans gedacht das der Schwan vollbracht*, what the goose but thought, that the swan full brought (or, to de-Saxonize it a little, what the goose conceived, that the swan achieved), and it may well be that the life, invention, and vigor shown by our popular speech, and the freedom with which it is shaped to the instant want of those who use it, are of the best omen for our having a swan at last. The part I have taken on myself is that of the humbler bird.

But it is affirmed that there is something innately vulgar in the Yankee dialect. M. Sainte-Beuve says, with his usual neatness: "*Je définis un patois une ancienne langue qui a eu des malheurs, ou encore une langue toute jeune et qui n'a pas fait fortune.*" The first part of his definition applies to a dialect like the Provençal, the last to the Tuscan before Dante had lifted it into a classic, and neither, it seems to me, will quite fit a *patois*, which is not properly a dialect, but rather certain archaisms, proverbial phrases, and modes of pronunciation, which maintain themselves among the uneducated side by side with the finished and universally accepted language. Norman French, for example, or Scotch down to the time of James VI., could hardly be called *patois*, while I should be half inclined to name the Yankee a *lingo* rather than a dialect. It has retained a few words now fallen into disuse in the mother country, like *to tarry*, *to progress*, *fleshy*, *fall*, and some others; it has changed the meaning of some, as in *freshet*; and it has clung to what I suspect to have been the broad Norman pronunciation of *e* (which Molière puts into the mouth of his rustics) in such words as *sarvant*, *perfect*, *vartoo*, and the like. It maintains something of the French sound of *a* also in words like *chamber*, *dänger* (though the latter had certainly begun to take its present sound so early as 1636, when I find it sometimes

spelt *dainger*). But in general it may be said that nothing can be found in it which does not still survive in some one or other of the English provincial dialects. There is, perhaps, a single exception in the verb *to sleeve*. To *sleeve* silk means to divide or ravel out a thread of silk with the point of a needle till it becomes *floss*. (A.-S. *sléfan*, to cleave = divide.) This, I think, explains the "*sleeveless errand*" in "*Troilus and Cressida*" so inadequately, sometimes so ludicrously darkened by the commentators. Is not a "*sleeveless errand*" one that cannot be unravelled, incomprehensible, and therefore bootless?

I am not speaking now of Americanisms properly so called, that is, of words or phrases which have grown into use here either through necessity, invention, or accident, such as a *carry*, a *one-horse affair*, a *prairie*, to *vamosé*. Even these are fewer than is sometimes taken for granted. But I think some fair defence may be made against the charge of vulgarity. Properly speaking, vulgarity is in the thought, and not in the word or the way of pronouncing it. Modern French, the most polite of languages, is barbarously vulgar if compared with the Latin out of which it has been corrupted, or even with Italian. There is a wider gap, and one implying greater boorishness, between *ministerium* and *métier*, or *sapiens* and *sachant*, than between *druv* and *drove* or *agin* and *against*, which last is plainly an arrant superlative. Our rustic *coverlid* is nearer its French original than the diminutive *coverlet*, into which it has been ignorantly corrupted in politer speech. I obtained from three cultivated Englishmen at different times three diverse pronunciations of a single word, — *cowcumber*, *coocumber*, and *cucumber*. Of these the first, which is Yankee also, comes nearest to the nasality of *concombre*. Lord Ossory assures us that Voltaire saw the best society in England, and Voltaire tells his countrymen that *handkerchief* was pronounced *hankercher*. I find it so spelt in Hakluyt and elsewhere. This enormity the Yankee still persists in, and as there is always a reason for such deviations from the sound as represented by the spelling, may we not suspect two sources of derivation, and find an ancestor for *kercher* in *couverture* rather than in *couvrechef*? And what greater phonetic vagary (which Dryden, by the way, called *fegary*) in our *lingua rustica* than this *ker* for *couvre*? I copy from the fly-leaves of my books, where I have noted them from time to time, a few examples of pronunciation and phrase which will show that the Yankee often has antiquity and very respectable literary authority on his side. My list might be largely increased by referring to glossaries, but to them every one can go for himself, and I have gathered enough for my purpose.

I will take first those cases in which something like the French sound has been preserved in certain single letters and diphthongs. And this opens a curious question as to how long this Gallicism maintained itself in England.

Sometimes a divergence in pronunciation has given us two words with different meanings, as in *genteel* and *jaunty*, which I find coming in toward the close of the seventeenth century, and wavering between *genteel* and *jantee*. It is usual in America to drop the *u* in words ending in *our*—a very proper change recommended by Howell two centuries ago, and carried out by him so far as his printers would allow. This and the corresponding changes in *musique*, *music*, and the like, which he also advocated, show that in his time the French accent indicated by the superfluous letters (for French had once nearly as strong an accent as Italian) had gone out of use. There is plenty of French accent down to the end of Elizabeth's reign. In Daniel we have *riches'* and *counsel'*, in Bishop Hall *comel'*, *chapêlain*, in Donne *picture's*, *virtue's*, *presence's*, *mortal'*, *merit'*, *hainous'*, *giant'*, with many more, and Marston's satires are full of them. The two latter, however, are not to be relied on, as they may be suspected of Chaucerizing. Herrick writes *baptism*. The tendency to throw the accent backward began early. But the incongruities are perplexing, and perhaps mark the period of transition. In Warner's "Albion's England" we have *creator'* and *créature'* side by side with the modern *creator* and *creature*. *E'nvoy* and *e'nvying* occur in Campion (1602), and yet *envy* survived Milton. In some cases we have gone back again nearer to the French, as in *rev'enne* for *reven'ue*. I had been so used to hearing *imbecile* pronounced with the accent on the first syllable, which is in accordance with the general tendency in such matters, that I was surprised to find *imbec'ile* in a verse of Wordsworth. The dictionaries all give it so. I asked a highly cultivated Englishman, and he declared for *im-beceel'*. In general it may be assumed that accent will finally settle on the syllable dictated by greater ease and therefore quickness of utterance. *Blas'phemous*, for example, is more rapidly pronounced than *blasphem'ous*, to which our Yankee clings, following in this the usage of many of the older poets. *Amer'ican* is easier than *Ameri'can*, and therefore the false quantity has carried the day, though the true one may be found in George Herbert, and even so late as Cowley.

To come back to the matter in hand. Our "uplandish man" retains the soft or thin sound of the *u* in some words, such as *rule*, *truth* (sometimes also pronounced *trüth*, not *trooth*), while he says *noo* for *new*, and gives to *view* and *few* so indescribable a mixture of the two sounds with a slight nasal tincture that it may be called the Yankee shibboleth. Voltaire says that the English pronounce *true* as if it rhymed with *view*, and this is the sound our rustics give to it. Spenser writes *deow* (*dew*) which can only be pronounced with the Yankee nasality. In *rule* the least sound of a precedes the *u*. I find *reule* in Peacock's "Repressor." He probably pronounced it *rayoölé*, as the old French word from which it is derived was very likely to be sounded at first, with a reminiscence

of its original *regula*. Tindal has *rueler*, and the Coventry Plays have *preudent*. In the "Parlyament of Byrdes" I find *reule*. As for *noo*, may it not claim some sanction in its derivation, whether from *nouveau* or *neuf*, the ancient sound of which may very well have been *noof*, as nearer *novus*? *Beef* would seem more like to have come from *buffe* than from *bauf*, unless the two were mere varieties of spelling. The Saxon *few* may have caught enough from its French cousin *peu* to claim the benefit of the same doubt as to sound; and our slang phrase *a few* (as "I licked him a few") may well appeal to *un peu* for sense and authority. Nay, might not *lick* itself turn out to be the good old word *lam* in an English disguise, if the latter should claim descent as, perhaps, he fairly might, from the Latin *lambere*? The New England *ferce* for *fierce*, and *perce* for *pierce* (sometimes heard as *fairce* and *pairce*), are also Norman. For its antiquity I cite the rhyme of *verse* and *pierce* in Chapman and Donne, and in some commendatory verses by a Mr. Berkenhead before the poems of Francis Beaumont. Our *parlous* for *perilous* is of the same kind, and is nearer Shakespeare's *parlous* than the modern pronunciation. One other Gallicism survives in our pronunciation. Perhaps I should rather call it a semi-Gallicism, for it is the result of a futile effort to reproduce a French sound with English lips. Thus for *joint*, *employ*, *royal*, we have *jynt*, *emply*, *rÿle*, the last differing only from *rile* (*roil*) in a prolongation of the *y* sound. I find *royal* so pronounced in the "Mirror for Magistrates." In Walter de Bibbesworth I find *solives* Englished by *gistes*. This, it is true, may have been pronounced *jeests*, but the pronunciation *jysts* must have preceded the present spelling, which was no doubt adopted after the radical meaning was forgotten, as analogical with other words in *oi*. In the same way after Norman-French influence had softened the *l* out of *would* (we already find *woud* for *veut* in N. F. poems), *should* followed the example, and then an *l* was foisted into *could*, where it does not belong, to satisfy the logic of the eye, which has affected the pronunciation and even the spelling of English more than is commonly supposed. I meet with *eyster* for *oyster* as early as the fourteenth century. I find *viage* in Bishop Hall and Middleton the dramatist, *bile* for *boil* in Donne and Chrononhotonthologos, *line* for *loin* in Hall, *ryall* and *chyse* (for *choise*), *dystrye* for *destroy*, in the Coventry Plays. In Chapman's "All Fools" is the misprint of *employ* for *imply*, fairly inferring an identity of sound in the last syllable. Indeed, this pronunciation was habitual till after Pope, and Rogers tells us that the elegant Gray said *naise* for *noise* just as our rustics still do. Our *cornish* (which I find also in Herrick) remembers the French better than *cornice* does. While clinging more closely to the Anglo-Saxon in dropping the *g* from the end of the present participle, the Yankee now and then pleases himself with an experiment in French nasality in words ending in *n*. It is not,



so far as my experience goes, very common, though it may formerly have been more so. *Capting*, for instance, I never heard save in jest, the habitual form being *kepp'n*. But at any rate it is no invention of ours. In that delightful old volume, "Ane Compendious Buke of Godly and Spirituall Songs," in which I know not whether the piety itself or the simplicity of its expression be more charming, I find *burding*, *garding*, and *cousing*, and in the State Trials *uncerting* used by a gentleman. I confess that I like the *n* better than the *ng*.

Of Yankee preterites I find *risse* and *rize* for *rose* in Beaumont and Fletcher, Middleton and Dryden, *clim* in Spenser, *chees* (*chose*) in Sir John Mandevill, *give* (*gave*) in the Coventry Plays, *shet* (*shut*) in Golding's Ovid, *het* in Chapman and in Weever's Epitaphs, *thriv* and *smit* in Drayton, *quit* in Ben Jonson and Henry More, and *pled* in the Paston Letters, nay, even in the fastidious Landor. *Rid* for *rode* was anciently common. So likewise was *see* for *saw*, but I find it in no writer of authority (except Golding), unless Chaucer's *seie* and Gower's *sigh* were, as I am inclined to think, so sounded. *Shew* is used by Hector Boece, Giles Fletcher, Drummond of Hawthornden, and in the Paston Letters. Similar strong preterites, like *snew*, *threw*, and even *mew*, are not without example. I find *sew* for *sewed* in "Piers Ploughman." Indeed, the anomalies in English preterites are perplexing. We have probably transferred *flew* from *flow* (as the preterite of which I have heard it) to *fly* because we had another preterite in *fled*. Of weak preterites the Yankee retains *groued*, *blowed*, for which he has good authority, and less often *knowed*. His *sot* is merely a broad sounding of *sat*, no more inelegant than the common *got* for *gat*, which he further degrades into *gut*. When he says *darst*, he uses a form as old as Chaucer.

The Yankee has retained something of the long sound of the *a* in such words as *axe*, *wax*, pronouncing them *exe*, *wex* (shortened from *air*, *waix*). He also says *hev* and *hed* (*hāve*, *hād*) for *have* and *had*. In most cases he follows an Anglo-Saxon usage. In *air* for *axle* he certainly does. I find *wex* and *aishes* (*ashes*) in Pecock, and *exe* in the Paston Letters. Golding rhymes *wax* with *wex* and spells *challenge chelenge*. Chaucer wrote *hendy*. Dryden rhymes *can* with *men*, as Mr. Biglow would. Alexander Gill, Milton's teacher, in his "Logonomia" cites *hez* for *hath* as peculiar to Lincolnshire. I find *hayth* in Collier's "Bibliographical Account of Early English Literature" under the date 1584, and Lord Cromwell so wrote it. Sir Christopher Wren wrote *belcony*. Our *fect* is only the O. F. *faict*. *Thaim* for *them* was common in the sixteenth century. We have an example of the same thing in the double form of the verb *thrash*, *thresh*. While the New-Englander cannot be brought to say *instead* for *instid* (commonly 'stid where not the last word in a sentence), he changes the *i* into *e* in *red* for *rid*, *tell* for *till*, *hender* for *hinder*, *rense* for *rinse*. I find *red* in the old interlude of "Ther-

sytes," tell in a letter of Daborne to Henslowe, and also, I shudder to mention it, in a letter of the great Duchess of Marlborough, Atossa herself! It occurs twice in a single verse of the Chester Plays,

"Tell the day of dome, tell the beames blow."

From the word *blow* (in another sense) is formed *blowth*, which I heard again this summer after a long interval. Mr. Wright<sup>1</sup> explains it as meaning "a blossom." With us a single blossom is a *blow*, while *blowth* means the blossoming in general. A farmer would say that there was a good *blowth* on his fruit-trees. The word retreats farther inland and away from the railways, year by year. Wither rhymes *hinder* with *slender*, and Shakespeare and Lovelace have *renched* for *rinced*. In "Gammer Gurton" and "Mirror for Magistrates" is *sence* for *since*; Marlborough's Duchess so writes it, and Donne rhymes *since* with *Amiens* and *patience*, Bishop Hall and Otway with *pretence*, Chapman with *citizens*, Dryden with *providence*. Indeed, why should not *sithence* take that form? Dryden's wife (an earl's daughter) has *tell* for *till*, Margaret, mother of Henry VII., writes *seche* for *such*, and our *ef* finds authority in the old form *yeffe*.

*E* sometimes takes the place of *u*, as *ledge*, *tredge*, *bresh*. I find *tredge* in the interlude of "Jack Jugler," *bresh* in a citation by Collier from "London Cries" of the middle of the seventeenth century, and *resche* for *rush* (fifteenth century) in the very valuable "Volume of Vocabularies" edited by Mr. Wright. *Resce* is one of the Anglo-Saxon forms of the word in Bosworth's A.-S. Dictionary. Golding has *shet*. The Yankee always shortens the *u* in the ending *ture*, making *ventur*, *natur*, *pictur*, and so on. This was common, also, among the educated of the last generation. I am inclined to think it may have been once universal, and I certainly think it more elegant than the vile *vencher*, *naycher*, *pickcher*, that have taken its place, sounding like the invention of a lexicographer to mitigate a sneeze. Nash in his "Pierce Penniless" has *ventur*, and so spells it, and I meet it also in Spenser, Drayton, Ben Jonson, Herrick, and Prior. Spenser has *tort'rest*, which can be contracted only from *tortur* and not from *torcher*. Quarles rhymes *nature* with *creator*, and Dryden with *satire*, which he doubtless pronounced according to its older form of *satyr*. Quarles has also *torture* and *mortar*. Mary Boleyn writes *kreatur*. I find *pikter* in Izaak Walton's autograph will.

I shall now give some examples which cannot so easily be ranked under any special head. Gill charges the Eastern counties with *kiver* for *cover*, and *ta* for *to*. The Yankee pronounces both *too* and *to like ta* (like the *tu* in *touch*) where they are not emphatic. When they are, both become *tu*. In old spelling, *to* is the common (and indeed correct) form of *too*, which is only *to* with the sense of *in addition*. I suspect that the sound of our *too* has caught something

<sup>1</sup> Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English.



from the French *tout*, and it is possible that the old *too too* is not a reduplication, but a reminiscence of the feminine form of the same word (*toute*) as anciently pronounced, with the *e* not yet silenced. Gill gives a Northern origin to *geaun* for *gown* and *waund* for *wound* (*vulnus*). Lovelace has *waund*, but there is something too dreadful in suspecting Spenser (who borealized in his pastorals) of having ever been guilty of *geaun*! And yet some delicate mouths even now are careful to observe the Hibernicism of *ge-ard* for *guard*, and *ge-ur*l for *girl*. Sir Philip Sidney (*credite posteri*!) wrote *furr* for *far*. I would hardly have believed it had I not seen it in *fac-simile*. As some consolation, I find *furder* in Lord Bacon and Donne, and Wither rhymes *far* with *cur*. The Yankee, who omits the final *d* in many words, as do the Scotch, makes up for it by adding one in *geound*. The purist does not feel the loss of the *d* sensibly in *lawn* and *yon*, from the former of which it has dropped again after a wrongful adoption (retained in *laundry*), while it properly belongs to the latter. But what shall we make of *git*, *yit*, and *yis*? I find *yis* and *git* in Warner's "Albion's England," yet rhyming with *wit*, *admit*, and *fit* in Donne, with *wit* in the "Revenger's Tragedy," Beaumont, and Suckling, with *wit* in Dryden, and latest of all with *wit* in Sir Hanbury Williams. Prior rhymes *fitting* and *begetting*. Worse is to come. Among others, Donne rhymes *again* with *sin*, and Quarles repeatedly with *in*. Ben for *been*, of which our dear Whittier is so fond, has the authority of Sackville, "Gammer Gurton" (the work of a bishop), Chapman, Dryden, and many more, though *bin* seems to have been the common form. Whittier's accenting the first syllable of *rom'ance* finds an accomplice in Drayton among others, and, though manifestly wrong, is analogous with *Rom'ans*. Of other Yankeeisms, whether of form or pronunciation, which I have met with I add a few at random. Peacock writes *soudiers* (*sogers*, *soudoyers*), and Chapman and Gill *sodder*. This absorption of the *l* is common in various dialects, especially in the Scottish. Peacock writes also *biyende*, and the authors of "Jack Jugler" and "Gammer Gurton" *yender*. The Yankee includes "*yon*" in the same category, and says "hither an' yen," for "to and fro." (Cf. German *jenseits*.) Peacock and plenty more have *wastle*. Tindal has *agynste*, *gretter*, *shett*, *ondone*, *deby'te*, and *scace*. "Jack Jugler" has *scacely* (which I have often heard, though *skurce* is the common form), and Donne and Dryden make *great* rhyme with *set*. In the inscription on Caxton's tomb I find *ynd* for *end*, which the Yankee more often makes *eend*, still using familiarly the old phrase "right anend" for "continuously." His "stret (straight) along" in the same sense, which I thought peculiar to him, I find in Peacock. Tindal's *deby'te* for *deputy* is so perfectly Yankee that I could almost fancy the brave martyr to have been deacon of the First Parish at Jaalam Centre. "Jack Jugler" further gives us *playst* and *sartayne*. Dry-

den rhymes *certain* with *parting*, and Chapman and Ben Jonson use *certain*, as the Yankee always does, for *certainly*. The "Coventry Mysteries" have *occupied*, *massage*, *nateralle*, *matral* (*material*), and *meracles*, — all excellent Yankeeisms. In the "Quatre fils, Aymon" (1504),<sup>1</sup> is *vertus* for *virtuous*. Thomas Fuller called *volume vollum*, I suspect, for he spells it *volumne*. However, *per contra*, Yankees habitually say *colume* for *column*. Indeed, to prove that our ancestors brought their pronunciation with them from the Old Country, and have not wantonly debased their mother tongue, I need only to cite the words *scriptur*, *Israll*, *athists*, and *cherfulness* from Governor Bradford's "History." So the good man wrote them, and so the good descendants of his fellow-exiles still pronounce them. Brampton Gurdon writes *shet* in a letter to Winthrop. *Purtend* (*pretend*) has crept like a serpent into the "Paradise of Dainty Devices;" *purvide*, which is not so bad, is in Chaucer. These, of course, are universal vulgarisms, and not peculiar to the Yankee. Butler has a Yankee phrase, and pronunciation too, in "To which these *carr*'ings-on did tend," Langham or Laneham, who wrote an account of the festivities at Kenilworth in honor of Queen Bess, and who evidently tried to spell phonetically, makes *sorrows* into *sororz*. Herrick writes *hollow* for *halloo*, and perhaps pronounced it (*horresco suggerens*!) *holló*, as Yankees do. Why not, when it comes from *hold*? I find *ffelaschyppe* (fellowship) in the Coventry Plays. Spenser and his queen neither of them scrupled to write *afore*, and the former feels no inelegance even in *chaw* and *idee*. *Fore* was common till after Herrick. Dryden has *do's* for *does*, and his wife spells *worse wosce*. *Afeared* was once universal. Warner has *ery* for *ever a*; nay, he also has *illy*, with which we were once ignorantly reproached by persons more familiar with Murray's Grammar than with English literature. And why not *illy*? Mr. Bartlett says it is "a word used by writers of an inferior class, who do not seem to perceive that *ill* is itself an adverb, without the termination *ly*," and quotes Dr. Messer, President of Brown University, as asking triumphantly, "Why don't you say *welly*?" I should like to have had Dr. Messer answer his own question. It would be truer to say that it was used by people who still remembered that *ill* was an adjective, the shortened form of *evil*, out of which Shakespeare and the translators of the Bible ventured to make *evilly*. This slurred *evil* is "the dram of *eale*" in "Hamlet." I find *illy* in Warner. The objection to *illy* is not an etymological one, but simply that it is contrary to good usage, — a very sufficient reason. *Ill* as an adverb was at first a vulgarism, precisely like the rustic's when he says, "I was treated *bad*." May not the reason of this exceptional form be looked for in that tendency to dodge what is hard to pronounce, to which I have already alluded? If the

<sup>1</sup> Cited in Collier. (I give my authority where I do not quote from the original book.)

letters were distinctly uttered, as they should be, it would take too much time to say *ill-ly*, *well-ly*, and it is to be observed that we have avoided *smally*<sup>1</sup> and *tally* in the same way, though we add *ish* to them without hesitation in *smallish* and *tallish*. We have, to be sure, *dully* and *fully*, but for the one we prefer *stupidly*, and the other (though this may have come from eliding the *y* before *as*) is giving way to *full*. The uneducated, whose utterance is slower, still make adverbs when they will by adding *like* to all manner of adjectives. We have had *big* charged upon us, because we use it where an Englishman would now use *great*. I fully admit that it were better to distinguish between them, allowing to *big* a certain contemptuous quality; but as for authority, I want none better than that of Jeremy Taylor, who, in his noble sermon "On the Return of Prayer," speaks of "Jesus, whose spirit was meek and gentle up to the greatness of the *biggest* example." As for our double negative, I shall waste no time in quoting instances of it, because it was once as universal in English as it still is in the neo-Latin languages, where it does not strike us as vulgar. I am not sure that the loss of it is not to be regretted. But surely I shall admit the vulgarity of slurring or altogether eliding certain terminal consonants? I admit that a clear and sharp-cut enunciation is one of the crowning charms and elegancies of speech. Words so uttered are like coins fresh from the mint, compared with the worn and dingy drudges of long service, — I do not mean American coins, for those look less badly the more they lose of their original ugliness. No one is more painfully conscious than I of the contrast between the rifle-crack of an Englishman's *yes* and *no*, and the wet-fuse drawl of the same monosyllables in the mouths of my countrymen. But I do not find the dropping of final consonants disagreeable in Allan Ramsay or Burns, nor do I believe that our literary ancestors were sensible of that inelegance in the fusing them together of which we are conscious. How many educated men pronounce the *t* in *chestnut*? how many say *pentise* for *penthouse*, as they should. When a Yankee skipper says that he is "boun' for Gloster" (not Gloucester, with the leave of the Universal Schoolmaster),<sup>2</sup> he but speaks like Chaucer or an old ballad-singer, though they would have pronounced it *boon*. This is one of the cases where the *d* is surreptitious, and has been added in compliment to the verb *bind*, with which it has nothing to do. If we consider the root of the word (though of course I grant that every race has a right to do what it will with what is so peculiarly its own as its speech), the *d* has no more right there than at the end of *gone*, where it is often put by children, who are our best guides to the sources of linguistic corruption, and the best teachers of its processes. Cromwell, minister of Henry VIII., writes *worle*

<sup>1</sup> The word occurs in a letter of Mary Boleyn, in Golding, and Warner. Milton also was fond of the word.

for *world*. Chapman has *wan* for *wand*, and *lawn* has rightfully displaced *laund*, though with no thought, I suspect, of etymology. Rogers tells us that Lady Bathurst sent him some letters written to William III. by Queen Mary, in which she addresses him as "*Dear Husban*." The old form *expoun*, which our farmers use, is more correct than the form with a barbarous *d* tacked on which has taken its place. Of the kind opposite to this, like our *gownd* for *gown*, and the London cockney's *wind* for *wine*, I find *drownd* for *drown* in the "Misfortunes of Arthur" (1584), and in Swift. And, by the way, whence came the long sound of *wind* which our poets still retain, and which survives in "winding" a horn, a totally different word from "winding" a kite-string? We say *behind* and *hinder* (comparative) and yet to *hinder*. Shakespeare pronounced *kind kind*, or what becomes of his play on that word and *kin* in "Hamlet"? Nay, did he not even (shall I dare to hint it?) drop the final *d* as the Yankee still does? John Lilly plays in the same way on *kindred* and *kindness*.

But to come to some other ancient instances. Warner rhymes *bounds* with *crowns*, *grounds* with *towns*, *text* with *sex*, *worst* with *crust*, *interrupts* with *cups*; Drayton, *defects* with *sex*; Chapman, *amends* with *cleanse*; Webster, *defects* with *checks*; Ben Jonson, *minds* with *combines*; Marston, *trust* and *obsequious*, *clothes* and *shows*; Dryden gives the same sound to *clothes*, and has also *minds* with *designs*. Of course, I do not affirm that their ears may not have told them that these were imperfect rhymes (though I am by no means sure even of that), but they surely would never have tolerated any such had they suspected the least vulgarity in them. Prior has the rhyme *first* and *trust*, but puts it into the mouth of a landlady. Swift has *stunted* and *burnt it*, an intentionally imperfect rhyme, no doubt, but which I cite as giving precisely the Yankee pronunciation of *burned*. Donne couples in unhallowed wedlock *after* and *matter*, thus seeming to give to both the true Yankee sound; and it is not uncommon to find *after* and *daughter*. Worse than all, in one of Dodsley's Old Plays we have *onions* rhyming with *minions*, — I have tears in my eyes while I record it. And yet what is viler than the universal *Misses* (Mrs.) for *Mistress*? This was once a vulgarity, and in "The Miseries of Inforced Marriage" the rhyme (printed as prose in Dodsley's Old Plays by Collier),

"To make my young mistress  
Delighting in kisses,"

is put into the mouth of the clown. Our people say *Injun* for *Indian*. The tendency to make this change where *i* follows *d* is common. The Italian *giorno* and French *jour* from *diurnus* are familiar examples. And yet *Injun* is one of those deprivations which the taste challenges peremptorily, though it have the authority

<sup>2</sup> Though I find Worcester in the *Mirror for Magistrates*.

of Charles Cotton—who rhymes “*Indies*” with “*cringes*”—and four English lexicographers, beginning with Dr. Sheridan, bid us say *invidgeous*. Yet after all it is no worse than the debasement which all our terminations in *tion* and *tience* have undergone, which yet we hear with *resignashun* and *payshunce*, though it might have aroused both *impat-i-ence* and *indigna-ti-on* in Shakespeare’s time. When George Herbert tells us that if the sermon be dull,

“God takes a text and preacheth pati-ence,”

the prolongation of the word seems to convey some hint at the longanimity of the virtue. Consider what a poor curtail we have made of Ocean. There was something of his heave and expanse in *o-ce-an*, and Fletcher knew how to use it when he wrote so fine a verse as the second of these, the best deep-sea verse I know,—

“In desperate storms stem with a little rudder  
The tumbling ruins of the ocean.”

Oceanus was not then wholly shorn of his divine proportions, and our modern *oshun* sounds like the gush of small-beer in comparison. Some other contractions of ours have a vulgar air about them. *More’n* for *more than*, as one of the worst, may stand for a type of such. Yet our old dramatists are full of such obscurations (elisions they can hardly be called) of the *th*, making *whêr* of *whether*, *whêre* of *whither*, *hêre* of *hither*, *bro’r* of *brother*, *smo’r* of *smother*, *mo’r* of *mother*, and so on. And dear Brer Rabbit, can I forget him? Indeed, it is this that explains the word *rare* (which has Dryden’s support), and which we say of meat where an Englishman would use *underdone*. I do not believe, with the dictionaries, that it had ever anything to do with the Icelandic *hrar* (*raw*), as it plainly has not in *rareripe*, which means earlier ripe,—President Lincoln said of a precocious boy that “he was a *rareripe*.” And I do not believe it, for this reason, that the earliest form of the word with us was, and the commoner now in the inland parts still is, so far as I can discover, *raredone*. Golding has “egs reerosted,” which, whatever else it mean, cannot mean *raw-roasted*. I find *rather* as a monosyllable in Donne, and still better, as giving the sound, rhyming with *fair* in Warner. There is an epigram of Sir Thomas Browne in which the words *rather* than make a monosyllable:—

“What furie is ’t to take Death’s part  
And rather than by Nature, die by Art!”

The contraction *more’n* I find in the old play “*Fuimus Troes*,” in a verse where the measure is so strongly accented as to leave it beyond doubt,—

“A golden crown whose heirs  
More than half the world subdue.”

It may be, however, that the contraction is in “*th’* orld.” It is unmistakable in the “*Second Maiden’s Tragedy*”:—

“It were but folly,  
Dear soul, to boast of *more than* I can perform.”

Is our *gin* for *given* more violent than *mar’l* for

*marvel*, which was once common, and which I find as late as Herrick? Nay, Herrick has *gin* (spelling it *gen*), too, as do the Scotch, who agree with us likewise in preferring *chimly* to *chimney*.

I will now leave pronunciation and turn to words or phrases which have been supposed peculiar to us, only pausing to pick up a single dropped stitch, in the pronunciation of the word *supreme*, which I had thought native till I found it in the well-languaged Daniel. I will begin with a word of which I have never met with any example in any English writer of authority. We express the first stage of withering in a green plant suddenly cut down by the verb *to wilt*. It is, of course, own cousin of the German *welken*, but I have never come upon it in literary use, and my own books of reference give me faint help. Graff gives *welhen*, *marcescere*, and refers to *weih* (*weak*), and conjecturally to A.-S. *hwelan*. The A.-S. *wealwian* (*to wither*) is nearer, but not so near as two words in the Icelandic, which perhaps put us on the track of its ancestry,—*velgi*, *tepefacere* (and *velki*, with the derivative), meaning *contaminare*. *Wilt*, at any rate, is a good word, filling, as it does, a sensible gap between drooping and withering, and the imaginative phrase “he wilted right down,” like “he caved right in,” is a true Americanism. *Wilt* occurs in English provincial glossaries, but is explained by *wither*, which with us it does not mean. We have a few words such as *cache*, *cogoh*, *carry* (*portage*), *shoot* (*chute*), *timber* (*forest*), *bushwhack* (to pull a boat along by the bushes on the edge of a stream), *buckeye* (a picturesque word for the horse-chestnut); but how many can we be said to have fairly brought into the language, as Alexander Gill, who first mentions Americanisms, meant it when he said, “*Sed et ab Americanis nonnulla mutuamur ut MAIZ et CANOA*”? Very few, I suspect, and those mostly by borrowing from the French, German, Spanish, or Indian.<sup>1</sup> “The Dipper” for the “Great Bear” strikes me as having a native air. *Bogus*, in the sense of *worthless*, is undoubtedly ours, but is, I more than suspect, a corruption of the French *bagasse* (from low Latin *bagasea*), which travelled up the Mississippi from New Orleans, where it was used for the refuse of the sugar-cane. It is true, we have modified the meaning of some words. We use *freshet* in the sense of *flood*, for which I have not chanced upon any authority. Our New England cross between Ancient Pistol and Dugald Dalgetty, Captain Underhill, uses the word (1638) to mean a *current*, and I do not recollect it elsewhere in that sense. I therefore leave it with a ? for future explorers. *Crick* for *creek* I find in Captain John Smith and in the dedication of Fuller’s “*Holy Warre*,” and *run*, meaning a *small stream*, in Waymouth’s “*Voyage*” (1605). *Humans* for *men*, which Mr. Bartlett includes in his “*Dictionary of Americanisms*,” is Chapman’s habitual phrase in his

<sup>1</sup> This was written twenty years ago, and now (1890) I cannot open an English journal without coming upon an Americanism.



translation of Homer. I find it also in the old play of "The Hog hath lost his Pearl." *Dogs for andirons* is still current in New England, and in Walter de Bibbesworth I find *chiens* glossed in the margin by *andirons*. *Gunning for shooting* is in Drayton. We once got credit for the poetical word *fall* for *autumn*, but Mr. Bartlett and the last edition of Webster's Dictionary refer us to Dryden. It is even older, for I find it in Drayton, and Bishop Hall has *autumn fall*. Middleton plays upon the word: "May'st thou have a reasonable good *spring*, for thou art like to have many dangerous foul *falls*." Daniel does the same, and Coleridge uses it as we do. Gray uses the archaism *picked* for *peaked*, and the word *smudge* (as our backwoodsmen do) for a smothered fire. Lord Herbert of Cherbury (more properly perhaps than even Sidney, the last *preux chevalier*) has "the Emperor's folks" just as a Yankee would say it. *Loan for lend*, with which we have hitherto been blackened, I must retort upon the mother island, for it appears so long ago as in "Albion's England." *Fleshy*, in the sense of *stout*, may claim Ben Jonson's warrant, and I find it also so lately as in Franklin's "Lucian." *Chore* is also Jonson's word, and I am inclined to prefer it to *chare* and *char*, because I think that I see a more natural origin for it in the French *jour* — whence it might come to mean a day's work, and thence a job — than anywhere else.<sup>1</sup> *At onst* for *at once* I thought a corruption of our own, till I found it in the Chester Plays. I am now inclined to suspect it no corruption at all, but only an erratic and obsolete superlative at *onest*. *To progress* was flung in our teeth till Mr. Pickering retorted with Shakespeare's "doth progress down thy cheeks." I confess that I was never satisfied with this answer, because the accent was different, and because the word might here be reckoned a substantive quite as well as a verb. Mr. Bartlett (in his dictionary above cited) adds a surrebutter in a verse from Ford's "Broken Heart." Here the word is clearly a verb, but with the accent unhappily still on the first syllable. Mr. Bartlett says that he "cannot say whether the word was used in Bacon's time or not." It certainly was, and with the accent we give to it. Ben Jonson, in the "Alchemist," has this verse,

"Progress' so from extreme unto extreme,"

and Sir Philip Sidney,

"Progressing then from fair Turias' golden place."

Surely we may now sleep in peace, and our English cousins will forgive us, since we have cleared ourselves from any suspicion of originality in the matter! Even after I had convinced myself that the chances were desperately against our having invented any of the *Americanisms* with which we are *faulted* and which we are in the habit of *voicing*, there were one or two which had so prevalently indigenous an accent as to stagger me a little. One of these

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. A. L. Mayhew of Wadham College, Oxford, has convinced me that I was astray in this.

was "the biggest *thing out*." Alas, even this slender comfort is denied me. Old Gower has

"So harde an herte was none *oute*,"

and

"That such mervelle was none *oute*."

He also, by the way, says "a *sight* of flowres" as naturally as our up-country folk would say it. Poor for *lean*, thirds for *dower*, and *dry* for *thirsty* I find in Middleton's plays. *Dry* is also in Skelton and in the "World" (1754). In a note on Middleton, Mr. Dyce thinks it needful to explain the phrase *I can't tell* (universal in America) by the gloss *I could not say*. Middleton also uses *sneeked*, which I had believed an Americanism till I saw it there. It is, of course, only another form of *snatch*, analogous to *theek* and *thatch* (cf. the proper names Dekker and Thacher), *break* (*brack*) and *breach*, *make* (still common with us) and *match*. 'Long on for *occasionally* ("who is this 'long on?") occurs constantly in Gower and likewise in Middleton. 'Cause *why* is in Chaucer. *Raising* (an English version of the French *leven*) for *yeast* is employed by Gayton in his "Festivous Notes on Don Quixote." I have never seen an instance of our New England word *emptins* in the same sense, nor can I divine its original. Gayton has *limekill*; also *shuts* for *shutters*, and the latter is used by Mrs. Hutchinson in her "Life of Colonel Hutchinson." Bishop Hall, and Purchas in his "Pilgrims," have *chist* for *chest*, and it is certainly nearer *cista*, as well as to its form in the Teutonic languages, whence probably we got it. We retain the old sound from *cist*, but *chest* is as old as Chaucer. Lovelace says *wropt* for *wrapt*. "Musicianer" I had always associated with the militia-musters of my boyhood, and too hastily concluded it an abomination of our own, but Mr. Wright calls it a Norfolk word, and I find it to be as old as 1642 by an extract in Collier. "Not worth the time of day," had passed with me for native till I saw it in Shakespeare's "Pericles." For *slick* (which is only a shorter sound of *sleek*, like *crick* and the now universal *britches* for *breeches*) I will only call Chapman and Jonson. "That's a sure card!" and "That's a stinger!" both sound like modern slang, but you will find the one in the old interlude of "Thersytes" (1537), and the other in Middleton. "Right here," a favorite phrase with our orators and with a certain class of our editors, turns up *passim* in the Chester and Coventry plays. Mr. Dickens found something very ludicrous in what he considered our neologism *right away*. But I find a phrase very like it, and which I would gladly suspect to be a misprint for it, in "Gammer Gurton": —

"Lyght it and bring it *tite away*."

But *tite* is the true word in this case. After all, what is it but another form of *straightway*? *Cussedness*, meaning *wickedness*, *maliginity*, and *cuss*, a sneaking, ill-natured fellow, in such phrases as "He done it out o' pure cussedness,"



and "He is a nateral cuss," have been commonly thought Yankeeisms. To vent certain contemptuously indignant moods they are admirable in their rough-and-ready way. But neither is our own. *Cursydnesse*, in the same sense of malignant wickedness, occurs in the Coventry Plays, and *cuss* may perhaps claim to have come in with the Conqueror. At least the term is also French. Saint Simon uses it and confesses its usefulness. Speaking of the Abbé Dubois, he says, "Qui étoit en plein ce qu'un mauvais François appelle un *sacre*, mais qui ne se peut guère exprimer autrement." "Not worth a cuss," though supported by "not worth a damn," may be a mere corruption, since "not worth a cress" is in "Piers Ploughman." "I don't see it," was the popular slang a year or two ago, and seemed to spring from the soil; but no, it is in Cibber's "Careless Husband." *Green sauce for vegetables* I meet in Beaumont and Fletcher, Gayton, and elsewhere. Our rustic pronunciation *sahee* (for either the diphthong *au* was anciently pronounced *ah*, or else we have followed abundant analogy in changing it to the latter sound, as we have in *chance*, *dance*, and so many more) may be the older one, and at least gives some hint at its ancestor *salsa*. *Warn*, in the sense of *notify*, is, I believe, now peculiar to us, but Pecoock so employs it. I find *primmer* (*primer*, as we pronounce it) in Beaumont and Fletcher, and a "square eater" too (compare our "square meal"), *heft* for *weight*, and "muchness" in the "Mirror for Magistrates," *bankbill* in Swift and Fielding, and as for *that* I might say *passim*. *To cotton to* is, I rather think, an Americanism. The nearest approach to it I have found is *cotton together*, in Congreve's "Love for Love." *To cotton or cotten*, in another sense, is old and common. Our word means to *cling*, and its origin, possibly, is to be sought in another direction, perhaps in A.-S. *cwead*, which means *mud*, *clay* (both proverbially clinging), or better yet, in the Icelandic *qvoda* (otherwise *kód*), meaning *resin* and *glue*, which are κατ' ἐξοχήν, sticky substances. *To spit cotton* is, I think, American, and also, perhaps, *to flax for to beat*. *To the halves* still survives among us, though apparently obsolete in England. It means either to let or to hire a piece of land, receiving half the profit in money or in kind (*partibus locare*). I mention it because in a note by some English editor, to which I have lost my reference, I have seen it wrongly explained. The editors of Nares cite Burton. *To put*, in the sense of *to go*, as *Put!* for *Be gone!* would seem our own, and yet it is strictly analogous to the French *se mettre à la voie*, and the Italian *mettersi in via*. Indeed, Dante has a verse,

"Io sarei [for mi sarei] già messo per lo sentiero,"

which, but for the indignity, might be translated,

"I should, ere this, have *put* along the way."

I deprecate in advance any share in General

Banks's notions of international law, but we may all take a just pride in his exuberant eloquence as something distinctively American. When he spoke a few years ago of "letting the Union slide," even those who, for political purposes, reproached him with the sentiment, admired the indigenous virtue of his phrase. Yet I find "let the world slide" in Heywood's "Edward IV.," and in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Wit without Money," Valentine says,

"Will you go drink,

And let the world slide?"

So also in Sidney's "Arcadia,"

"Let his dominion slide."

In the one case it is put into the mouth of a clown, in the other, of a gentleman, and was evidently proverbial. It has even higher sanction, for Chaucer writes,

"Well nigh all other curés *let he slide*."

Mr. Bartlett gives "above one's bend" as an Americanism; but compare Hamlet's "to the top of my bent." *In his tracks for immediately* has acquired an American accent, and passes where he can for a native, but is an importation nevertheless; for what is he but the Latin *e vestigio*, or at best the Norman French *eneslespas*, both which have the same meaning? *Hotfoot* (provincial also in England), I find in the old romance of "Tristan,"

"Si s'en parti CHAUT PAS."

*Like for as* is never used in New England, but is universal in the South and West. It has on its side the authority of two kings (*ego sum rex Romanorum et supra grammaticam*), Henry VIII. and Charles I. This were ample, without throwing into the scale the scholar and poet Daniel. *Them* was used as a nominative by the majesty of Edward VI., by Sir P. Hoby, and by Lord Paget (in Froude's "History"). I have never seen any passage adduced where *guess* was used as the Yankee uses it. The word was familiar in the mouths of our ancestors, but with a different shade of meaning from that we have given it, which is something like *rather think*, though the Yankee implies a confident certainty by it when he says, "I guess *I du!*" There are two examples in Otway, one of which ("So in the struggle, I guess the note was lost") perhaps might serve our purpose, and Coleridge's

"I guess 't was fearful there to see"

certainly comes very near. But I have a higher authority than either in Selden, who, in one of his notes to the "Polybion," writes, "The first inventor of them (*I guess you dislike not the addition*) was one Berthold Swartz." Here he must mean by it, "I take it for granted." Robert Greene, in his "Quip for an Upstart Courtier," makes Cloth-breeches say, "but I gesse your maistership never tried what true honor meant." In this case the word seems to be used with a meaning precisely like that

which we give it. Another peculiarity almost as prominent is the beginning sentences, especially in answer to questions, with "well." Put before such a phrase as "How d'e do?" it is commonly short, and has the sound of *wul*, but in reply it is deliberative, and the various shades of meaning which can be conveyed by difference of intonation, and by prolonging or abbreviating, I should vainly attempt to describe. I have heard *ooa-ahl*, *wahl*, *ahl*, *wäl*, and something nearly approaching the sound of the *le* in *able*. Sometimes before "I" it dwindles to a mere *l*, as "I *l* dunno." A friend of mine (why should I not please myself, though I displease him, by brightening my page with the initials of the most exquisite of humorists, J. H. ?) told me that he once heard five "wells," like pioneers, precede the answer to an inquiry about the price of land. The first was the ordinary *wul*, in deference to custom; the second, the long, perpend *ooahl*, with a falling inflection of the voice; the third, the same, but with the voice rising, as if in despair of a conclusion, into a plaintively nasal whine; the fourth, *wulh*, ending in the aspirate of a sigh; and then, fifth, came a short, sharp *wal*, showing that a conclusion had been reached. I have used this latter form in the "Biglow Papers," because, if enough nasality be added, it represents most nearly the average sound of what I may call the interjection.

A locution prevails in the Southern and Middle States which is so curious that, though never heard in New England, I will give a few lines to its discussion, the more readily because it is extinct elsewhere. I mean the use of *allow* in the sense of *affirm*, as "I allow that 's a good horse." I find the word so used in 1558 by Anthony Jenkinson in Hakluyt: "Corne they sowe not, neither doe eate any bread, mocking the Christians for the same, and disabling our strengthe, saying we live by eating the toppe of a weede, and drinke a drinke made of the same, *allowing* theyr great devouring of flesh and drinking of milke to be the increase of theyr strength." That is, they undervalued our strength, and affirmed their own to be the result of a certain diet. In another passage of the same narrative the word has its more common meaning of approving or praising: "The said king, much *allowing* this declaration, said." Ducange quotes Bracton *sub voce* ADLOCARE for the meaning "to admit as proved," and the transition from this to "affirm" is by no means violent. Izaak Walton has "*Lebault allows* waterfrogs to be good meat," and here the word is equivalent to *affirms*. At the same time, when we consider some of the meanings of *allow* in old English, and of *allowen* in old French, and also remember that the verbs *prize* and *praise* are from one root, I think we must admit *allaudare* to a share in the paternity of *allow*. The sentence from Hakluyt would read equally well, "contemning our strengthe, . . . and praising (or valuing) their great eating of flesh as the cause of their increase in strength." After all, if we confine ourselves to *allocare*, it

may turn out that the word was somewhere and somewhen used for *to bet*, analogously to *put up*, *put down*, *post* (cf. Spanish *apostar*), and the like. I hear boys in the street continually saying, "I bet that's a good horse," or what not, meaning by no means to risk anything beyond their opinion in the matter.

The word *improve*, in the sense of "occupy, make use of, employ," as Dr. Pickering defines it, he long ago proved to be no neologism. He would have done better, I think, had he substituted *profit by* for *employ*. He cites Dr. Franklin as saying that the word had never, so far as he knew, been used in New England before he left it in 1723, except in Dr. Mather's "Remarkable Providences," which he oddly calls a "very old book." Franklin, as Dr. Pickering goes on to show, was mistaken. Mr. Bartlett in his "Dictionary" merely abridges Pickering. Both of them should have confined the application of the word to material things, its extension to which is all that is peculiar in the supposed American use of it. For surely "Complete Letter-Writers" have been "*improving* this opportunity" time out of mind. I will illustrate the word a little further, because Pickering cites no English authorities. Skelton has a passage in his "Phyllyp Sparowe," which I quote the rather as it contains also the word *allowed*, and as it distinguishes *improve* from *employ*:—

"His [Chaucer's] Englysh well allowed,  
So as it is *improved*,  
For as it is employed,  
There is no Englysh voyd."

Here the meaning is *to profit by*. In Fuller's "Holy Warre" (1647), we have "The Egyptians standing on the firm ground, were thereby enabled to *improve* and enforce their darts to the utmost." Here the word might certainly mean *to make use of*. Mrs. Hutchinson (Life of Colonel H.) uses the word in the same way: "And therefore did not *emproove* his interest to engage the country in the quarrell." Swift in one of his letters says: "There is not an acre of land in Ireland turned to half its advantage; yet it is better *improved* than the people." I find it also in "Strength out of Weakness" (1652), and Plutarch's "Morals" (1714), but I know of only one example of its use in the purely American sense, and that is "a very good *improvement* for a mill" in the "State Trials" (Speech of the Attorney-General in the Lady Ivy's case, 1684). In the sense of *employ*, I could cite a dozen old English authorities.

In running over the fly-leaves of those delightful folios for this reference, I find a note which reminds me of another word, for our abuse of which we have been deservedly ridiculed. I mean *lady*. It is true I might cite the example of the Italian *donna* <sup>1</sup> (*domina*), which has been treated in the same way by a whole nation, and not, as *lady* among us, by the uncultivated only. It perhaps grew into use in

<sup>1</sup> *Dame*, in English, is a decayed gentlewoman of the same family.

the half-democratic republics of Italy in the same way and for the same reasons as with us. But I admit that our abuse of the word is villainous. I know of an orator who once said in a public meeting where bonnets preponderated, that "the ladies were last at the cross and first at the tomb"! But similar sins were committed before our day and in the mother country. In the "Harleian Miscellany" (vol. v. p. 455) I find "this lady is my servant; the hedger's daughter Ioan." In the "State Trials" I learn of "a gentlewoman that lives cook with" such a one, and I hear the Lord High Steward speaking of the wife of a waiter at a bagnio as a *gentlewoman*! From the same authority, by the way, I can state that our vile habit of chewing tobacco had the somewhat unsavory example of Titus Oates, and I know by tradition from an eye-witness that the elegant General Burgoyne partook of the same vice. Howell, in one of his letters (dated 26 August, 1623), speaks thus of another "institution" which many have thought American: "They speak much of that boisterous Bishop of Halverstadt (for so they term him here), that, having taken a place where there were two Monasteries of Nuns and Friars, he caus'd divers featherbeds to be rip'd, and all the feathers to be thrown in a great Hall, whither the Nuns and Friars were thrust naked with their bodies oil'd and pitch'd, and to tumble among the feathers." Howell speaks as if the thing were new to him, and I know not if the "boisterous" Bishop was the inventor of it, but I find it practised in England before our Revolution.

Before leaving the subject, I will add a few comments made from time to time on the margin of Mr. Bartlett's excellent "Dictionary," to which I am glad thus publicly to acknowledge my many obligations. "Avails" is good old English, and the *vails* of Sir Joshua Reynolds's porter are famous. Averse *from*, averse *to*, and in connection with them the English vulgarity "different *to*:" the corrupt use of *to* in these cases, as well as in the Yankee "he lives *to* Salem," "to home," and others, must be a very old one, for in the one case it plainly arose from confounding the two French prepositions *à* (from Latin *ad* and *ab*), and in the other from translating the first of them. I once thought "different *to*" a modern vulgarity, and Mr. Thackeray, on my pointing it out to him in "Henry Esmond," confessed it to be an anachronism. Mr. Bartlett refers to "the old writers quoted in Richardson's Dictionary" for "different *to*," though in my edition of that work all the examples are with *from*. But I find *to* used invariably by Sir R. Hawkins in Hakluyt. *Banjo* is a negro corruption of O. E. *bandore*. *Bind-weed* can hardly be modern, for *wood-bind* is old and radically right, intertwining itself through *bindan* and *windan* with classic stems. *Bobolink*: is this a contraction for Bob o' Lincoln? I find *bobolynnes*, in one of the poems attributed to Skelton, where it may be rendered *giddy-pate*, a term very fit for the bird in his ecstasies. *Cruel* for *great* is in Hak-

luyt. *Bowling-alley* is in Nash's "Pierce Penilesse." *Curious*, meaning *nice*, occurs continually in old writers, and is as old as Peacock's "Repressor." *Droger* is O. E. *drugger*. *Educational* is in Burke. *Feeze* is only a form of *fixe*. *To fix*, in the American sense, I find used by the Commissioners of the United Colonies so early as 1675, "their arms well fixed and fit for service." *To take the foot in the hand* is German; so is *to go under*. *Gundalow* is old; I find *gundelo* in Hakluyt, and *gundello* in Booth's reprint of the folio Shakespeare of 1623. *Gonoff* is O. E. *gnaffe*. *Heap* is in "Piers Ploughman" ("and other names *an heep*"), and in Hakluyt ("seeing such a *heap* of their enemies ready to devour them"). *To liquor* is in the "Puritan" ("call 'em in, and liquor 'em a little"). *To loaf*: this, I think, is unquestionably German. *Laufen* is pronounced *lofen* in some parts of Germany, and I once heard one German student say to another, *Ich lauf* (lofe) *hier bis du wiederkehrst*, and he began accordingly to saunter up and down, in short, *to loaf*. *To mull*, Mr. Bartlett says, means "to soften, to dispirit," and quotes from "Margaret," — "There has been a pretty considerable *mullin* going on among the doctors," — where it surely cannot mean what he says it does. We have always heard *mulling* used for *stirring*, *bustling*, sometimes in an underhand way. It is a metaphor derived probably from *mulling* wine, and the word itself must be a corruption of *mell*, from O. F. *mesler*. *Pair of stairs* is in Hakluyt. *To pull up stakes* is in Curwen's Journal, and therefore pre-Revolutionary. I think I have met with it earlier. *Raise*: under this word Mr. Bartlett omits "to raise a house," that is, the frame of a wooden one, and also the substantive formed from it, a *raisin*. *Retire for go to bed* is in Fielding's "Amelia." *Setting-poles* cannot be new, for I find "some set [the boats] with long poles" in Hakluyt. *Shoulder-hitters*: I find that *shoulder-striker* is old, though I have lost the reference to my authority. *Snag* is no new word, though perhaps the Western application of it is so; but I find in Gill the proverb, "A bird in the bag is worth two on the snag." Dryden has *swop* and *to rights*. *Trail*: Hakluyt has "many ways *trailed* by the wilde beastes."

I subjoin a few phrases not in Mr. Bartlett's book which I have heard. *Bald-headed*: "to go it bald-headed;" in great haste, as where one rushes out without his hat. *Bogue*: "I don't git much done 'thout I *bogue* right in along 'th my men." *Carry*: a portage. *Cat-nap*: a short doze. *Cat-stick*: a small stick. *Chowder-head*: a muddle-brain. *Cling-john*: a soft cake of rye. *Cocoa-nut*: the head. *Coohees*: applied to the people of certain settlements in Western Pennsylvania, from their use of the archaic form *Quo' he*. *Dunnow's I know*: the nearest your true Yankee ever comes to acknowledging ignorance. *Essence-pedler*: a skunk. *First-rate and a half*. *Fish-flakes*, for drying fish: O. E. *fleck* (cratis). *Gander-party*: a social gathering of men only. *Gawnicus*: a



dolt. *Hawkins's whetstone*: rum; in derision of one Hawkins, a well-known temperance-lecturer. *Hyper*: to bustle: "I mus' hyper about an' git tea." *Keeler-tub*: one in which dishes are washed. ("And Greasy Joan doth keel the pot.") *Lap-tea*: where the guests are too many to sit at table. *Last of pea-time*: to be hard-up. *Lose-laid* (loose-laid): a weaver's term, and probably English; weak-willed. *Malahack*: to cut up hastily or awkwardly. *Moonglade*: a beautiful word: for the track of moonlight on the water. *Off-ox*: an unmanageable, cross-grained fellow. *Old Driver*, *Old Splitfoot*: the Devil. *Onhitch*: to pull trigger (cf. Spanish *disparar*). *Popular*: conceited. *Rote*: sound of surf before a storm. *Rot-gut*: cheap whiskey; the word occurs in Heywood's "English Traveller" and Addison's "Drummer," for a poor kind of drink. *Seem*: it is habitual with the New-Englander to put this verb to strange uses, as "I can't seem to be suited," "I could n't seem to know him." *Sidehill*, for *hillside*. *State-house*: this seems an Americanism, whether invented or derived from the Dutch *Stadhuis*, I know not. *Strike and string*: from the game of ninepins; to make a *strike* is to knock down all the pins with one ball, hence it has come to mean fortunate, successful. *Swampers*: men who break out roads for lumberers. *Tormented*: euphemism for damned, as, "not a tormented cent." *Virginia fence*, to make a: to walk like a drunken man.

It is always worth while to note down the erratic words or phrases which one meets with in any dialect. They may throw light on the meaning of other words, on the relationship of languages, or even on history itself. In so composite a language as ours they often supply a different form to express a different shade of meaning, as in *viol* and *fiddle*, *thrid* and *thread*, *smother* and *smoulder*, where the *l* has crept in by a false analogy with *would*. We have given back to England the excellent adjective *lengthy*, formed honestly like *earthy*, *drouthy*, and others, thus enabling their journalists to characterize our President's messages by a word civilly compromising between *long* and *tedious*, so as not to endanger the peace of the two countries by wounding our national sensitiveness to British criticism. Let me give two curious examples of the antiseptic property of dialects at which I have already glanced. Dante has *dindi* as a childish or low word for *danari* (money), and in Shropshire small Roman coins are still dug up which the peasants call *dinders*. This can hardly be a chance coincidence, but seems rather to carry the word back to the Roman soldiery. So our farmers say *chuk*, *chuk*, to their pigs, and *ciacco* is one of the Italian words for *hog*. When a countryman tells us that he "fell all of a heap," I cannot help thinking that he unconsciously points to an affinity between our word *tumble*, and the Latin *tumulus*, that is older than most others.

<sup>1</sup> Which, whether in that form, or under its aliases *witch-grass* and *couch-grass*, points us back to its original Saxon *quick*.

I believe that words, or even the mere intonation of them, have an astonishing vitality and power of propagation by the root, like the gardener's pest, *quitch-grass*,<sup>1</sup> while the application or combination of them may be new. It is in these last that my countrymen seem to me full of humor, invention, quickness of wit, and that sense of subtle analogy which needs only refining to become fancy and imagination. Prosaic as American life seems in many of its aspects to a European, bleak and bare as it is on the side of tradition, and utterly orphaned of the solemn inspiration of antiquity, I cannot help thinking that the ordinary talk of unlettered men among us is fuller of metaphor and of phrases that suggest lively images than that of any other people I have seen. Very many such will be found in Mr. Bartlett's book, though his short list of proverbs at the end seem to me, with one or two exceptions, as un-American as possible. Most of them have no character at all but coarseness, and are quite too long-skirted for working proverbs, in which language always "takes off its coat to it," as a Yankee would say. There are plenty that have a more native and puckery flavor, seedlings from the old stock often, and yet new varieties. One hears such not seldom among us Easterners, and the West would yield many more. "Mean enough to steal acorns from a blind hog;" "Cold as the north side of a Jenoaary gravestone by starlight;" "Hungry as a graven image;" "Pop'lar as a hen with one chicken;" "A hen's time ain't much;" "Quicker 'n greased lightnin'"; "Ther's sech a thing ez bein' tu" (our Yankee paraphrase of *μῆδὲν ἄγαν*); hence the phrase *too'in' round*, meaning a supererogatory activity like that of flies; "Stingy enough to skim his milk at both ends"; "Hot as the Devil's kitchen;" "Handy as a pocket in a shirt;" "He's a whole team and the dog under the wagon;" "All deacons are good, but there's odds in deacons" (to *deacon* berries is to put the largest atop); "So thievish they hev to take in their stone walls nights;"<sup>2</sup> may serve as specimens. "I take my tea *barfoot*," said a backwoodsman when asked if he would have cream and sugar. (I find *barfoot*, by the way, in the Coventry Plays.) A man speaking to me once of a very rocky clearing said, "Stone's got a pretty heavy mortgage on that land," and I overheard a guide in the woods say to his companions who were urging him to sing, "Wal, I *did* sing once, but toons gut invented, an' thet spilt my trade." Whoever has driven over a stream by a bridge made of *slabs* will feel the picturesque force of the epithet *slab-bridged* applied to a fellow of shaky character. Almost every county has some good die-sinker in phrase, whose mintage passes into the currency of the whole neighborhood. Such a one described the county jail (the one stone building where all the dwellings are of wood)

<sup>2</sup> And, by the way, the Yankee never says "o' nights," but uses the older adverbial form, analogous to the German *nachts*.



as "the house whose underpinnin' come up to the eaves," and called hell "the place where they did n't rake up their fires nights." I once asked a stage-driver if the other side of a hill were as steep as the one we were climbing: "Steep? chain lightnin' could n' go down it 'thout puttin' the shoe on!" And this brings me back to the exaggeration of which I spoke before. To me there is something very taking in the negro "so black that charcoal made a chalk-mark on him," and the wooden shingle "painted so like marble that it sank in water," as if its very consciousness or its vanity had been overpersuaded by the cunning of the painter. I heard a man, in order to give a notion of some very cold weather, say to another that a certain Joe, who had been taking mercury, found a lump of quicksilver in each boot, when he went home to dinner. This power of rapidly dramatizing a dry fact into flesh and blood and the vivid conception of Joe as a human thermometer strike me as showing a poetic sense that may be refined into faculty. At any rate there is humor here, and not mere quickness of wit, — the deeper and not the shallower quality. The *tendency* of humor is always towards overplus of expression, while the very essence of wit is its logical precision. Captain Basil Hall denied that our people had any humor, deceived, perhaps, by their gravity of manner. But this very seriousness is often the outward sign of that humorous quality of the mind which delights in finding an element of identity in things seemingly the most incongruous, and then again in forcing an incongruity upon things identical. Perhaps Captain Hall had no humor himself, and if so he would never find it. Did he always feel the point of what was said to himself? I doubt it, because I happen to know a chance he once had given him in vain. The Captain was walking up and down the veranda of a country tavern in Massachusetts while the coach changed horses. A thunder-storm was going on, and, with that pleasant European air of indirect self-compliment in condescending to be surprised by American merit, which we find so conciliating, he said to a countryman lounging against the door, "Pretty heavy thunder you have here." The other, who had divined at a glance his feeling of generous concession to a new country, drawled gravely, "Waal, we *du*, considerin' the number of inhabitants." This, the more I analyze it, the more humorous does it seem. The same man was capable of wit also, when he would. He was a cabinet-maker, and was once employed to make some commandment-tables for the parish meeting-house. The parson, a very old man, annoyed him by looking into his workshop every morning, and cautioning him to be very sure to pick out "clear mahogany without any *knots* in it." At last, wearied out, he retorted one day: "Wal, Dr. B., I guess ef I was to leave the *nots* out o' some o' the c'man'ments, 't'ould soot you full ez wal!"

If I had taken the pains to write down the

proverbial or pithy phrases I have heard, or if I had sooner thought of noting the Yankeeisms I met with in my reading, I might have been able to do more justice to my theme. But I have done all I wished in respect to pronunciation, if I have proved that where we are vulgar, we have the countenance of very good company. For, as to the *jus et norma loquendi*, I agree with Horace and those who have paraphrased or commented him, from Boileau to Gray. I think that a good rule for style is Galiani's definition of sublime oratory, — "l'art de tout dire sans être mis à la Bastille dans un pays où il est défendu de rien dire." I profess myself a fanatical purist, but with a hearty contempt for the speech-gilders who affect purism without any thorough, or even pedagogic, knowledge of the engendure, growth, and affinities of the noble language about whose *mésalliances* they profess (like Dean Alford) to be so solicitous. If *they* had their way —! "Doch es sey," says Lessing, "dass jene gothische Höflichkeit eine unentbehrliche Tugend des hentigen Umganges ist. Soll sie darum unsere Schriften eben so schaal und falsch machen als unsern Umgang?" And Drayton was not far wrong in affirming that

"'T is possible to climb,  
To kindle, or to slake,  
Although in Skelton's rhyme."

Cumberland in his *Memoirs* tells us that when, in the midst of Admiral Rodney's great sea-fight, Sir Charles Douglas said to him, "Behold, Sir George, the Greeks and Trojans contending for the body of Patroclus!" the Admiral answered, peevishly, "Damn the Greeks and damn the Trojans! I have other things to think of." After the battle was won, Rodney thus to Sir Charles, "Now, my dear friend, I am at the service of your Greeks and Trojans, and the whole of Homer's *Iliad*, or as much of it as you please!" I had some such feeling of the impertinence of our pseudo-classicality when I chose our homely dialect to work in. Should we be nothing, because somebody had contrived to be something (and that perhaps in a provincial dialect) ages ago? and to be nothing by our very attempt to be that something, which they had already been, and which therefore nobody could be again without being a bore? Is there no way left, then, I thought, of being natural, of being *naïf*, which means nothing more than native, of belonging to the age and country in which you are born? The Yankee, at least, is a new phenomenon; let us try to be *that*. It is perhaps a *pis aller*, but is not *No Thoroughfare* written up everywhere else? In the literary world, things seemed to me very much as they were in the latter half of the last century. Pope, skimming the cream of good sense and expression wherever he could find it, had made, not exactly poetry, but an honest, salable butter of worldly wisdom which pleasantly lubricated some of the drier morsels of life's daily bread, and, seeing this, scores of harmlessly insane people went on for the next

fifty years coaxing his buttermilk with the regular up and down of the pentameter churn. And in our day do we not scent everywhere, and even carry away in our clothes against our will, that faint perfume of musk which Mr. Tennyson has left behind him, or worse, of Heine's *patchouli*? And might it not be possible to escape them by turning into one of our narrow New England lanes, shut in though it were by bleak stone walls on either hand, and where no better flowers were to be gathered than goldenrod and hardhack?

Beside the advantage of getting out of the beaten track, our dialect offered others hardly inferior. As I was about to make an endeavor to state them, I remembered something that the clear-sighted Goethe had said about Hebel's "Allemanische Gedichte," which, making proper deduction for special reference to the book under review, expresses what I would have said far better than I could hope to do: "Allen diesen innern guten Eigenschaften kommt die behagliche naive Sprache sehr zu statten. Man findet mehrere sinnlich bedeutende und wohlklingende Worte . . . von einem, zwei Buchstaben, Abbreviationen, Contractionen, viele kurze, leichte Sylben, neue Reime, welches, mehr als man glaubt, ein Vortheil für den Dichter ist. Diese Elemente werden durch glückliche Constructionen und lebhaft Formen zu einem Styl zusammengedrängt der zu diesem Zwecke vor unserer Büchersprache grosse Vorzüge hat." Of course I do not mean to imply that I have come near achieving any such success as the great critic here indicates, but I think the success is *there*, and to be plucked by some more fortunate hand.

Nevertheless, I was encouraged by the approval of many whose opinions I valued. With a feeling too tender and grateful to be mixed with any vanity, I mention as one of these the late A. H. Clough, who more than any one of those I have known (no longer living), except Hawthorne, impressed me with the constant presence of that indefinable thing we call genius. He often suggested that I should try my hand at some Yankee Pastorals, which would admit of more sentiment and a higher tone without foregoing the advantage offered by the dialect. I have never completed anything of the kind, but, in this Second Series, both my remembrance of his counsel and the deeper feeling called up by the great interests at stake, led me to venture some passages nearer to what is called poetical than could have been admitted without incongruity into the former series. The time seemed calling to me, with the old poet, —

"Leave, then, your wonted prattle,  
The oaten reed forebear;  
For I hear a sound of battle,  
And trumpets rend the air!"

The only attempt I had ever made at anything like a pastoral (if that may be called an attempt which was the result almost of pure accident) was in "The Courtin'." While the introduction to the First Series was going

through the press, I received word from the printer that there was a blank page left which must be filled. I sat down at once and improvised another fictitious "notice of the press," in which, because verse would fill up space more cheaply than prose, I inserted an extract from a supposed ballad of Mr. Biglow. I kept no copy of it, and the printer, as directed, cut it off when the gap was filled. Presently I began to receive letters asking for the rest of it, sometimes for the *balance* of it. I had none, but to answer such demands, I patched a conclusion upon it in a later edition. Those who had only the first continued to importune me. Afterward, being asked to write it out as an autograph for the Baltimore Sanitary Commission Fair, I added other verses, into some of which I infused a little more sentiment in a homely way, and after a fashion completed it by sketching in the characters and making a connected story. Most likely I have spoiled it, but I shall put it at the end of this Introduction, to answer once for all those kindly importunings.

As I have seen extracts from what purported to be writings of Mr. Biglow, which were not genuine, I may properly take this opportunity to say, that the two volumes now published contain every line I ever printed under that pseudonym, and that I have never, so far as I can remember, written an anonymous article (elsewhere than in the "North American Review" and the "Atlantic Monthly," during my editorship of it) except a review of Mrs. Stowe's "Minister's Wooing," and, some twenty years ago, a sketch of the antislavery movement in America for an English journal.

A word more on pronunciation. I have endeavored to express this so far as I could by the types, taking such pains as, I fear, may sometimes make the reading harder than need be. At the same time, by studying uniformity I have sometimes been obliged to sacrifice minute exactness. The emphasis often modifies the habitual sound. For example, *for* is commonly *fer* (a shorter sound than *fur* for *far*), but when emphatic it always becomes *for*, as "*wut for!*" So *too* is pronounced like *to* (as it was anciently spelt), and to like *ta* (the sound as in the *tau* of *touch*), but *too*, when emphatic, changes into *tue*, and *to*, sometimes, in similar cases, into *toe*, as, "I did n' hardly know *wut toe* du!" Where vowels come together, or one precedes another following an aspirate, the two melt together, as was common with the older poets who formed their versification on French or Italian models. Drayton is thoroughly Yankee when he says "I 'xpect," and Pope when he says, "t' inspire." *With* becomes sometimes *'ith*, *'üth*, or *'th*, or even disappears wholly where it comes before *the*, as, "I went along th' Square" (along with the Squire), the *are* sound being an archaism which I have noticed also in *choir*, like the old Scottish *ghuair*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Greene in his *Quip* for an *Upstart Courtier* says, "to square it up and downe the streetes before his mistress."

(Herrick has, "Of flowers ne'er sucked by th' theiving bee.") *Without* becomes *athout* and *'thout*. *Afterwards* always retains its locative *s*, and is pronounced always *ahterwuds'*, with a strong accent on the last syllable. This oddity has some support in the erratic *towards'* instead of *to'wards*, which we find in the poets and sometimes hear. The sound given to the first syllable of *to'wards*, I may remark, sustains the Yankee lengthening of the *o* in *to*. At the beginning of a sentence, *ahterwuds'* has the accent on the first syllable; at the end of one, on the last; as, "*ah'terwuds' he tol' me*," "*he tol' me ah'terwuds'*." The Yankee never makes a mistake in his aspirates. *U* changes in many words to *e*, always in *such*, *brush*, *tush*, *hush*, *rush*, *blush*, seldom in *much*, oftener in *trust* and *crust*, never in *mush*, *gust*, *bust*, *tumble*, or (?) *flush*, in the latter case probably to avoid confusion with *flesh*. I have heard *flush* with the *ē* sound, however. For the same reason, I suspect, never in *gush* (at least, I never heard it), because we have already one *gesh* for *gash*. *A* and *i* short frequently become *e* short. *U* always becomes *o* in the prefix *un* (except *unto*), and *o* in return changes to *u* short in *uv* for *of*, and in some words beginning with *om*. *T* and *d*, *b* and *p*, *v* and *w*, remain intact. So much occurs to me in addition to what I said on this head in the preface to the former volume.

Of course in what I have said I wish to be understood as keeping in mind the difference between provincialisms properly so called and *slang*. *Slang* is always vulgar, because it is not a natural but an affected way of talking, and all mere tricks of speech or writing are offensive. I do not think that Mr. Biglow can be fairly charged with vulgarity, and I should have entirely failed in my design, if I had not made it appear that high and even refined sentiment may coexist with the shrewder and more comic elements of the Yankee character. I believe that what is essentially vulgar and mean-spirited in politics seldom has its source in the body of the people, but much rather among those who are made timid by their wealth or selfish by their love of power. A democracy can afford much better than an aristocracy to follow out its convictions, and is perhaps better qualified to build those convictions on plain principles of right and wrong, rather than on the shifting sands of expediency. I had always thought "Sam Slick" a libel on the Yankee character, and a complete falsification of Yankee modes of speech, though, for aught I know, it may be true in both respects so far as the British provinces are concerned. To me the dialect was native, was spoken all about me when a boy, at a time when an Irish day-laborer was as rare as an American one now. Since then I have made a study of it so far as opportunity allowed. But when I write in it, it is as in a mother tongue, and I am carried back far beyond any studies of it to long-ago noonnings in my father's hay-fields, and to the talk of Sam and Job over their jug of *blackstrap* under the shadow of the ash-tree

which still dapples the grass whence they have been gone so long.

But life is short, and prefaces should be. And so, my good friends, to whom this introductory epistle is addressed, farewell. Though some of you have remonstrated with me, I shall never write any more "Biglow Papers," however great the temptation,—great especially at the present time,—unless it be to complete the original plan of this Series by bringing out Mr. Sawin as an "original Union man." The very favor with which they have been received is a hindrance to me, by forcing on me a self-consciousness from which I was entirely free when I wrote the First Series. Moreover, I am no longer the same careless youth, with nothing to do but live to myself, my books, and my friends, that I was then. I always hated politics, in the ordinary sense of the word, and I am not likely to grow fonder of them, now that I have learned how rare it is to find a man who can keep principle clear from party and personal prejudice, or can conceive the possibility of another's doing so. I feel as if I could in some sort claim to be an *emeritus*, and I am sure that political satire will have full justice done it by that genuine and delightful humorist, the Rev. Petroleum V. Nasby. I regret that I killed off Mr. Wilbur so soon, for he would have enabled me to bring into this preface a number of learned quotations, which must now go a-begging, and also enabled me to dispersonalize myself into a vicarious egotism. He would have helped me likewise in clearing myself from a charge which I shall briefly touch on, because my friend Mr. Hughes has found it needful to defend me in his preface to one of the English editions of the "Biglow Papers." I thank Mr. Hughes heartily for his friendly care of my good name, and were his Preface accessible to my readers here (as I am glad it is not, for its partiality makes me blush), I should leave the matter where he left it. The charge is of profanity, brought in by persons who proclaimed African slavery of Divine institution, and is based (so far as I have heard) on two passages in the First Series—

"An' you've gut to git up airly,  
Ef you want to take in God,"

and,

"God 'll send the bill to you,"

and on some Scriptural illustrations by Mr. Sawin.

Now, in the first place, I was writing under an assumed character, and must talk as the person would whose mouthpiece I made myself. Will any one familiar with the New England countryman venture to tell me that he does *not* speak of sacred things familiarly? that Biblical allusions (allusions, that is, to the single book with whose language, from his church-going habits, he is intimate) are *not* frequent on his lips? If so, he cannot have pursued his studies of the character on so many long-ago muster-fields and at so many cattle-shows as I. But I scorn any such line of defence, and will confess



at once that one of the things I am proud of in my countrymen is (I am not speaking now of such persons as I have assumed Mr. Sawin to be) that they do not put their Maker away far from them, or interpret the fear of God into being afraid of Him. The Talmudists had conceived a deep truth when they said, that "all things were in the power of God, save the fear of God;" and when people stand in great dread of an invisible power, I suspect they mistake quite another personage for the Deity. I might justify myself for the passages criticised by many parallel ones from Scripture, but I need not. The Reverend Homer Wilbur's note-books supply me with three apposite quotations. The first is from a Father of the Roman Church, the second from a Father of the Anglican, and the third from a Father of Modern English poetry. The Puritan divines would furnish me with many more such. St. Bernard says, *Sapiens nummularius est Deus: nummum fictum non recipiet*; "A cunning money-changer is God: he will take in no base coin." Latimer says, "You shall perceive that God, by this example, shaketh us by the noses and taketh us by the ears." Familiar enough, both of them, one would say! But I should think Mr. Biglow had verily stolen the last of the two maligned passages from Dryden's "Don Sebastian," where I find

"And beg of Heaven to charge the bill on me!"

And there I leave the matter, being willing to believe that the Saint, the Martyr, and even the Poet, were as careful of God's honor as my critics are ever likely to be.

## II. GLOSSARY TO THE BIGLOW PAPERS

Act'lly, *actually*.

Air, *are*.

Airth, *earth*.

Airy, *area*.

Aree, *area*.

Arter, *after*.

As, *ask*.

Beller, *below*.

Belowses, *lungs*.

Ben, *been*.

Bile, *boil*.

Bimeby, *by and by*.

Blurt out, *to speak bluntly*.

Bust, *burst*.

Buster, *a roistering blade*; used also as a general superlative.

Caird, *carried*.

Cairn, *carrying*.

Caleb, *a turncoat*.

Cal'late, *calculate*.

Cass, *a person with two lives*.

Close, *clothes*.

Cockerel, *a young cock*.

Cocktail, *a kind of drink*; also, *an ornament peculiar to soldiers*.

Convention, *a place where people are imposed on*; *a juggler's show*.

Coons, *a cant term for a now defunct party*; derived, perhaps, from the fact of their being commonly up a tree.

Cornwallis, *a sort of muster in masquerade*; supposed to have had its origin soon after the Revolution, and to commemorate the surrender of Lord Cornwallis. It took the place of the old Guy Fawkes procession.

Crooked stick, *a perverse, froward person*.

Cunnle, *a colonel*.

Cus, *a curse*; also, *a pitiful fellow*.

Darsn't, used indiscriminately, either in singular or plural number, for *dare not*, *dares not*, and *dared not*.

Deacon off, *to give the cue to*; derived from a custom, once universal, but now extinct, in our New England Congregational churches. An important part of the office of deacon was to read aloud the hymns given out by the minister, one line at a time, the congregation singing each line as soon as read.

Demmercrat, *leadin'*, *one in favor of extending slavery*; *a free-trade lecturer maintained in the custom-house*.

Desput, *desperate*.

Dō', *don't*.

Doos, *does*.

Doughface, *a contented lick-spittle*; *a common variety of Northern politician*.

Dror, *draw*.

Du, *do*.

Dunno, *dno*, *do not* or *does not know*.

Dut, *dirt*.

Eend, *end*.

Ef, *if*.

Emptins, *yeast*.

Env'y, *envoy*.

Everlasting, *an intensive, without reference to duration*.

Ev'y, *every*.

Ez, *as*.

Fence, on the; said of one who halts between two opinions; *a trimmer*.

Fer, *for*.

Ferlie, *ferful, fearful*; also *an intensive*.

Fin', *find*.

Fish-skin, used in New England to clarify coffee.

Fix, *a difficulty, a nonplus*.

Foller, *folly, to follow*.

Forrerd, *forward*.

Frum, *from*.

Fur, *far*.

Furder, *farther*.

Furrier, *furrow*. Metaphorically, *to draw a straight furrow* is to live uprightly or decorously.

Fust, *first*.

Gin, *game*.

Git, *get*.

Gret, *great*.



Grit, *spirit, energy, pluck.*

Grout, *to sulk.*

Grouty, *crabbed, surly.*

Gum, *to impose on.*

Gump, *a foolish fellow, a dullard.*

Gut, *got.*

Hed, *had.*

Heern, *heard.*

Hellum, *helm.*

Hendy, *handy.*

Het, *heated.*

Hev, *have.*

Hez, *has.*

Holl, *whole.*

Holt, *hold.*

Huf, *hoof.*

Hull, *whole.*

Hum, *home.*

Humbug, *General Taylor's antislavery.*

Hut, *hurt.*

Idno, *I do not know.*

In'my, *enemy.*

Insines, *ensigns; used to designate both the officer who carries the standard, and the standard itself.*

Inter, *intu, into.*

Jedge, *judge.*

Jest, *just.*

Jine, *join.*

Jint, *joint.*

Junk, *a fragment of any solid substance.*

Keer, *care.*

Kep', *kept.*

Killock, *a small anchor.*

Kin', *kin' o', kinder, kind, kind of.*

Lawth, *loath.*

Less, *let's, let us.*

Let daylight into, *to shoot.*

Let on, *to hint, to confess, to own.*

Liek, *to beat, to overcome.*

Lights, *the bowels.*

Lily-pads, *leaves of the water-lily.*

Long-sweetening, *molasses.*

Mash, *marsh.*

Mean, *stingy, ill-natured.*

Min', *mind.*

Ninepunce, *ninepence, twelve and a half cents.*

Nowers, *nowhere.*

Offen, *often.*

Ole, *old.*

Ollers, *olluz, always.*

On, *of; used before it or them, or at the end of a sentence, as on't, on'em, nut ez ever I heard on.*

On'y, *only.*

Ossifer, *officer (seldom heard).*

Peaked, *pointed.*

Peek, *to peep.*

Pickerel, *the pike, a fish.*

Pint, *point.*

Pocket full of rocks, *plenty of money.*

Pooty, *pretty.*

Pop'ler, *conceited, popular.*

Pus, *purse.*

Put out, *troubled, vexed.*

Quarter, *a quarter-dollar.*

Queen's-arm, *a musket.*

Resh, *rush.*

Revelee, *the réveille.*

Rile, *to trouble.*

Riled, *angry; disturbed, as the sediment in any liquid.*

Riz, *risen.*

Row, *a long row to hoe, a difficult task.*

Rugged, *robust.*

Sarse, *abuse, impertinence.*

Sartin, *certain.*

Saxon, *sacristan, sexton.*

Scaliest, *worst.*

Seringe, *cringe.*

Scrounge, *to crowd.*

Sech, *such.*

Set by, *valued.*

Shakes, *great, of considerable consequence.*

Shappoes, *chapeaux, cocked-hats.*

Sheer, *share.*

Shet, *shut.*

Shut, *shirt.*

Skeered, *scared.*

Skeeter, *mosquito.*

Skooting, *running, or moving swiftly.*

Slarterin', *slaughtering.*

Slim, *contemptible.*

Snake, *crawled like a snake; but to snake any one out is to track him to his hiding-place; to snake a thing out is to snatch it out.*

Soffies, *sofas.*

Sogerin', *soldiering; a barbarous amusement common among men in the savage state.*

Som'ers, *somewhere.*

So'st, *so as that.*

Sot, *set, obstinate, resolute.*

Spiles, *spoils; objects of political ambition.*

Spry, *active.*

Steddles, *stout stakes driven into the salt marshes, on which the hay-ricks are set, and thus raised out of the reach of high tides.*

Streaked, *uncomfortable, discomfited.*

Suckle, *circle.*

Sutthin', *something.*

Suttin, *certain.*

Take on, *to sorrow.*

Talents, *talons.*

Taters, *potatoes.*

Tell, *till.*

Tetch, *touch.*

Tetch tu, *to be able; used always after a negative in this sense.*

Tollable, *tolerable.*

Toot, *used derisively for playing on any wind instrument.*

Thru, *through*.

Thundering, a euphemism common in New England for the profane English expression *devilish*. Perhaps derived from the belief, common formerly, that thunder was caused by the Prince of the Air, for some of whose accomplishments consult Cotton Mather.

Tu, *to, too*; commonly has this sound when used emphatically, or at the end of a sentence. At other times it has the sound of *t in tough*, as, *Ware ye goin' tu? Goin' ta Boston*.

Ugly, *ill-tempered, intractable*.

Uncle Sam, *United States*; the largest booster of liberty and owner of slaves.

Unrizzest, applied to dough or bread; *heavy, most unrisen, or most incapable of rising*.

V-spot, *a five-dollar bill*.

Vally, *value*.

Wake snakes, *to get into trouble*.

Wal, *well*; spoken with great deliberation, and sometimes with the *a* very much flattened, sometimes (but more seldom) very much broadened.

Wannut, *walnut (hickory)*.

Ware, *where*.

Ware, *were*.

Whopper, *an uncommonly large lie*; as, that General Taylor is in favor of the Wilmot Proviso.

Whig, *Whig*; a party now dissolved.

Wunt, *will not*.

Wut, *worse*.

Wut, *what*.

Wuth, *worth*; as, *Antislavery professions 'fore 'lection aint with a Bungtown copper*.

Wuz, *was, sometimes were*.

Yaller, *yellow*.

Yeller, *yellow*.

Yellers, *a disease of peach-trees*.

Zack, Ole, *a second Washington, an antislavery slaveholder; a humane buyer and seller of men and women, a Christian hero generally*.

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#### IV. NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Page 111. *On any pot that ever drew tea.*

When Mr. Garrison visited Edinburgh in 1846, a handsome silver tea-set was presented to him by his friends in that city. On the arrival of this gift at the Boston custom-house, it was charged with an enormous entrance duty, which would have been remitted if the articles had ever been used. It was supposed that if the owner had not been the leader of the unpopular abolitionists, this heavy impost would not have been laid on a friendly British tribute to an eminent American.

Page 111. *There jokes our Edmund.*

Edmund Quincy. [See page 383.]

Page 112. *Let Austin's total shipwreck say.*

On the occasion of the murder of Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy, editor of an anti-slavery newspaper at Alton, Illinois, an indignation meeting was held in Boston, at which Mr. Austin, Attorney-General of Massachusetts, made a violent pro-slavery speech, which called forth a crushing reply from Wendell Phillips, who thenceforth became a main pillar of abolitionism.

Page 112. *Smiles the reviled and pelted Stephen.*

Stephen S. Foster.

Page 112. *Sits Abby in her modest dress.*

Abby Kelley.

Page 131. *There is Bryant, as quiet, as cool, and as dignified.*

[I am quite sensible now that I did not do Mr. Bryant justice in the "Fable." But there was no personal feeling in what I said — though I have regretted what I *did* say because it might seem personal. I am now asked to write a review of his poems for the *North American*. If I do, I shall try to do him justice. *Letters* I. 221.]

Page 137. *But there comes Miranda, Zeus! where shall I flee to?*

[If it be not too late, strike out these four verses in "Miranda:"]

There is one thing she owns in her own private right,  
It is native and genuine — namely, her spite;  
When she acts as a censor, she privately blows  
A censor of vanity, 'neath her own nose.

Lowell to C. F. Briggs, October 4, 1848.]

#### THE BIGLOW PAPERS

I am indebted to Mr. Frank Beverly Williams for these illustrative notes.

##### FIRST SERIES

This series of the Biglow Papers relates to the Mexican War. It expresses the sentiment of New England, and particularly of Massachusetts, on that conflict, which in its aim and conduct had little of honor for the American Republic. The war was begun and prosecuted in the interest of Southern slaveholders. It was essential to the vitality of slavery that fresh fields should constantly be opened to it. Agriculture was almost the sole industry in which slaves could be profitably employed. That their labor should be wasteful and careless to preserve the productive powers of the soil was inevitable. New land was ever in demand, and the history of slavery in the United States is one long series of struggles for more territory. It was with this end in view that a colony of roving, adventurous Americans, settled in the thinly populated and poorly governed region now known as Texas, revolted from the Mexican government and secured admission to the Union, thus bringing on the war with Mexico. The Northern Whigs had protested against annexation, but after the war began their resistance grew more and more feeble. In the vain effort to retain their large Southern constituent, they sacrificed justice to expediency and avoided an issue that would not be put down. The story of the Mexican War is the story of the gradual decline of the great Whig party, and of the growth of that organization, successively known as the Liberty, Free-Soil, and Republican party, whose policy was the exclusion of slavery from all new territory. One more victory was granted to the Whigs in 1848. After that their strength failed rapidly. Northern sentiment was being roused to a sense of righteous indignation by Southern aggressions and the fervid exhortations of Garrison and his co-workers in the anti-slavery cause. Few, however, followed Garrison into disloyalty to the Constitution. The greater number preferred to stay in the Union and use such lawful political means as were available for the restriction of slavery. Their wisdom was demonstrated by the election of Abraham Lincoln twelve years after the Mexican War closed.

Page 181. *A cruetin Sarjunt.*

The act of May 13, 1846, authorized President Polk to employ the militia, and call out 50,000 volunteers, if necessary. He immediately called

for the full number of volunteers, asking Massachusetts for 777 men. On May 26 Governor Briggs issued a proclamation for the enrollment of the regiment. As the President's call was merely a request and not an order, many Whigs and the Abolitionists were for refusing it. *The Liberator* for June 5 severely censured the governor for complying, and accused him of not carrying out the resolutions of the last Whig Convention, which had pledged the party "to present as firm a front of opposition to the institution as was consistent with their allegiance to the Constitution."

Page 182. *Massachusetts . . . she's akneelin' with the rest.*

An allusion to the governor's call for troops (cf. note to p. 181) as well as to the vote on the War Bill. On May 11, 1846, the President sent to the House of Representatives his well-known message declaring the existence of war brought on "by the act of Mexico," and asking for a supply of \$10,000,000. Of the seven members from Massachusetts, all Whigs, two, Robert C. Winthrop, of Boston, and Amos Abbott, of Andover, voted for the bill. The Whigs throughout the country, remembering the fate of the party which had opposed the last war with England, sanctioned the measure as necessary for the preservation of the army, then in peril by the unauthorized acts of the President.

Page 182.

*Ha'n't they sold your colored seamen?*

*Ha'n't they made your env'ys w'iz?*

South Carolina, Louisiana, and several other Southern States at an early date passed acts to prevent free persons of color from entering their jurisdictions. These acts bore with particular severity upon colored seamen, who were imprisoned, fined, or whipped, and often sold into slavery. On the petition of the Massachusetts Legislature, Governor Briggs, in 1844, appointed Mr. Samuel Hoar agent to Charleston, and Mr. George Hubbard to New Orleans, to act on behalf of oppressed colored citizens of the Bay State. Mr. Hoar was expelled from South Carolina by order of the Legislature of that State, and Mr. Hubbard was forced by threats of violence to leave Louisiana. The obnoxious acts remained in force until after the Civil War.

Page 183. *Go to work an' part.*

Propositions to secede were not uncommon in New England at this time. The rights of the States had been strongly asserted on the acquisition of Louisiana in 1803, and on the admission of the State of that name in 1812. Among the resolutions of the Massachusetts Legislature adopted in 1845, relative to the proposed annexation of Texas, was one declaring that "such an act of admission would have no binding force whatever on the people of Massachusetts."

John Quincy Adams, in a discourse before the New York Historical Society, in 1839, claimed a right for the States "to part in friendship with each other . . . when the fraternal spirit shall give way," etc. The Garrisonian wing of the Abolitionists notoriously

advocated secession. There were several other instances of an expression of this sentiment, but for the most part they were not evoked by opposition to slavery.

Page 184. *Hoorawin' in ole Funnel.*

The Massachusetts regiment, though called for May 13, 1846, was not mustered into the United States' service till late in January of the next year. The officers, elected January 5, 1847, were as follows: Caleb Cushing, of Newburyport, Colonel; Isaac H. Wright, of Roxbury, Lieutenant-Colonel; Edward W. Abbott, of Andover, Major. Shortly before the troops embarked for the South, on the evening of Saturday, January 23, 1847, a public meeting was held in Faneuil Hall, where an elegant sword was presented to Mr. Wright by John A. Bolles, on behalf of the subscribers. Mr. Bolles' speech on this occasion is the one referred to.

Page 184. *Mister Bolles.*

Mr. John Augustus Bolles was the author of a prize essay on a *Congress of Nations*, published by the American Peace Society, an essay on *Usury and Usury Laws*, and of various articles in the *North American Review* and other periodicals. He was also the first editor of the *Boston Journal*. In 1843 he was Secretary of State for Massachusetts.

Page 185. *Rantoul.*

Mr. Robert Rantoul (1805-1852), a prominent lawyer and a most accomplished gentleman, was at this time United States District Attorney for Massachusetts. In 1851 he succeeded Webster in the Senate, but remained there a short time only. He was a Representative in Congress from 1851 till his death. Although a Democrat, Mr. Rantoul was strongly opposed to slavery.

Page 185. *Achokin' on 'em.*

Mr. Rantoul was an earnest advocate of the abolition of capital punishment. Public attention had recently been called to his views by some letters to Governor Briggs on the subject, written in February, 1846.

Page 186. *Caleb.*

Caleb Cushing, of Newburyport, Colonel of the Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers.

Page 188. *Guvener B.*

George Nixon Briggs was the Whig Governor of Massachusetts from 1844 to 1851. The campaign referred to here is that of 1847. Governor Briggs was renominated by acclamation and supported by his party with great enthusiasm. His opponent was Caleb Cushing, then in Mexico, and raised by President Polk to the rank of Brigadier-General. Cushing was defeated by a majority of 14,060.

Page 188. *John P. Robinson.*

John Paul Robinson (1799-1864) was a resident of Lowell, a lawyer of considerable ability, and a thorough classical scholar. He represented Lowell in the State Legislature in 1829, 1830, 1831, 1833, and 1842, and was Senator from Middlesex in 1836. Late in the gubernatorial contest of 1847 it was rumored that Robinson, heretofore a zealous Whig, and a

delegate to the recent Springfield Convention, had gone over to the Democratic or, as it was then styled, the "Loco" camp. The editor of the *Boston Palladium* wrote to him to learn the truth, and Robinson replied in an open letter avowing his intention to vote for Cushing.

Page 188. *General C.*

General Caleb Cushing.

Page 189. "Our country, however bounded."

Mr. R. C. Winthrop, M. C., in a speech at Faneuil Hall, July 4, 1845, said in deprecation of secession: "Our country—bounded by the St. John's and the Sabine, or however otherwise bounded or described, and be the measurements more or less—still our country—to be cherished in all our hearts, to be defended by all our hands." The sentiment was at once taken up and used effectively by the "Cotton" Whigs, those who inclined to favor the Mexican War.

Page 190. *The Liberator*.

The *Liberator* was William Lloyd Garrison's anti-slavery paper, published from 1831 to 1865. The "heresies" of which Mr. Wilbur speaks were Garrison's advocacy of secession, his well-known and eccentric views on "no government," woman suffrage, etc.

Page 191. *Scott*.

General W. Scott was mentioned as a possible Whig candidate for the Presidency in the summer of 1847, but was soon overshadowed by General Taylor.

Page 192. *Palfrey*.

December 6, 1847, Mr. R. C. Winthrop, of Boston, the Whig candidate for Speaker of the House in the Thirtieth Congress, was elected after three ballots. Mr. John Gorham Palfrey, elected a Whig member from Boston, and Mr. Joshua Giddings, of Ohio, refused to vote for Winthrop, and remained firm to the last in spite of the intensity of public opinion in their party. The election of a Whig Speaker in a manner depended on their votes. Had they supported Winthrop, he could have been elected on the second ballot. At the third he could not have been elected without them had not Mr. Levin, a Native American member, changed his vote, and Mr. Holmes, a Democrat from South Carolina, left the hall. Mr. Palfrey refused to vote for Mr. Winthrop because he was assured the latter would not, though his power over the committees, exert his influence to arrest the war and obstruct the extension of slavery into new territory. So bold and decided a stand at so critical a time excited great indignation for a time among the "Cotton" Whigs of Boston.

Page 193. *Springfield Convention*.

This convention was held September 29, 1847. The substance of the resolutions is given by Mr. Biglow.

Page 195. *Monteery*.

Monterey, the capital of Nueva Leon, capitulated September 24, 1846, thus giving the United States' troops control over about two thirds of the territory and one tenth of the population of Mexico.

Page 196. *Cherry Buster*.

August 20, 1847, General Scott stormed the heights of Cherubusco, and completely routed the 30,000 Mexicans stationed there under Santa Anna. Scott could have entered the capital at once in triumph had he not preferred to delay for peace negotiations.

Page 196. *The Tooleries*.

The French Revolution of 1848, which resulted in the deposition of Louis Philippe, was at this time impending.

Page 196. *The Post*.

The *Boston Post*, a Democratic, or Loco newspaper.

Page 196. *The Courier*.

The *Boston Courier*, in which the Biglow Papers first appeared, was a "Conscience" Whig paper.

Page 197. *Drayton and Sayres*.

In April, 1848, an attempt was made to abduct seventy-seven slaves from Washington in the schooner Pearl, under the conduct of Captain Drayton and Sayres, or Sayers, his mate. The slaves were speedily recaptured and sold South, while their brave defenders barely escaped with their lives from an infuriated mob. The Abolitionists in Congress determined to evoke from that body some expression of sentiment on the subject. On the 20th of April Senator Hale introduced a resolution implying but not expressing sympathy with the oppressed. It stirred the slaveholders to unusual intemperance of language. Calhoun was "amazed that even the Senator from New Hampshire had so little regard for the Constitution," and, forgetting his usual dignity, declared he "would as soon argue with a maniac from Bedlam" as with Mr. Hale. Mr. Foote, of Mississippi, was, perhaps, the most violent of all. He denounced any attempt of Congress to legislate on the subject of slavery as "a nefarious attempt to commit grand larceny." He charged Mr. Hale with being "as guilty as if he had committed highway robbery," and went on to say, "I invite him to visit Mississippi, and will tell him beforehand, in all honesty, that he could not go ten miles into the interior before he would grace one of the tallest trees of the forest with a rope around his neck, with the approbation of all honest and patriotic citizens; and that, if necessary, I should myself assist in the operation."

Mr. Hale stood almost alone with his resolution, which was soon arrested by an adjournment. A similar resolution failed in the House.

Drayton and Sayres were convicted by the District Court and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. In 1852 Senator Sumner secured for them an unconditional pardon from President Fillmore.

Page 198. *Mr. Foote*.

Cf. note above. Mr. Henry S. Foote was Senator from Mississippi from 1847 to 1852. He was a member of the Confederate Congress, and the author of *The War of the Rebellion*, and *Personal Recollections of Public Men*.

Page 198. *Mangum*.



W. P. Mangum (1792-1861) was Senator from North Carolina from 1831 to 1837, and from 1841 to 1847. He was President *pro tem.* of the Senate during Tyler's administration, 1842-1845.

Page 198. *Cass.*

Lewis Cass (1782-1866) was Jackson's Secretary of War from 1831 to 1836, Minister to France from 1836 to 1842, Senator from Michigan from 1845 to 1848, and candidate for the Presidency on the Democratic ticket in 1848. After his defeat by Taylor he was in 1849 returned to the Senate to fill out his unexpired term. He was Buchanan's Secretary of State until the famous message of December, 1860, when he resigned.

Page 198. *Davis.*

Jefferson Davis, the President of the so-called Confederate States, was a Senator from Mississippi from 1847 to 1850.

Page 199. *Hannegan.*

Edward A. Hannegan was Senator from Indiana from 1843 to 1849. He was afterwards Minister to Prussia and died in 1859.

Page 199. *Jarnagin.*

Spencer Jarnagin represented the State of Tennessee in the Senate from 1841 to 1847. He died in 1851.

Page 199. *Atherton.*

Charles G. Atherton (1804-1853) was Senator from New Hampshire from 1843 to 1849.

Page 199. *Colquitt.*

W. T. Colquitt (1799-1855) was Senator from Georgia, from 1843 to 1849.

Page 199. *Johnson.*

Reverdy Johnson was Senator from Maryland, 1845-1849.

Page 199. *Westcott.*

James D. Westcott, Senator from Florida, 1845-1849.

Page 199. *Lewis.*

Dixon H. Lewis represented Alabama in the House of Representatives from 1829 to 1843, and in the Senate from 1844 till his death in 1848.

Page 201. "*Payris.*"

The revolution in France was hailed with delight in the United States as a triumph of freedom and popular government. In Congress the event gave opportunity for much sounding declamation, in which the Southern members participated with as much enthusiasm as those from the North. At the same time when the Abolitionists sought to turn all this philosophy to some more practical application nearer home, the attempt was bitterly denounced at Washington and by the Democratic press generally. A striking instance of this inconsistency is afforded by a speech of Senator Foote. "The age of tyrants and slavery," said he, in allusion to France, "is drawing to a close. The happy period to be signalized by the universal emancipation of man from the fetters of civil oppression, and the recognition in all countries of the great principles of popular sovereignty, equality, and brotherhood, is at this moment visibly commencing." A few days later, when Mr. Mann, the attorney for Drayton and Sayres,

quoted these very words in palliation of his clients' offence, he was peremptorily checked by the judge for uttering "inflammatory" words that might "endanger our institutions."

Page 203. *Candidate for the Presidency.*

In the campaign of 1848 the Whigs determined to have substantially no platform or programme at all, in order to retain the Southern element in their party. Accordingly a colorless candidate was selected in the person of General Zachary Taylor, who, it was said, had never voted or made any political confession of faith. He was nominated as the "people's candidate," and men of all parties were invited to support him. He refused to pledge himself to any policy or enter into any details, unless on some such obsolete issue as that of a National Bank. After it became apparent that his followers were chiefly Whigs, he declared himself a Whig also, "although not an ultra one." He particularly avoided compromising himself on the slavery question. When, in the beginning of 1847, Mr. J. W. Taylor, of the *Cincinnati Signal*, questioned him on the Wilmot Proviso, he answered in such vague phrases that the confused editor interpreted them first as favoring and finally as opposing the measure. This declaration, together with the candidate's announcement that he was a Whig, was taken in the North to mean that he was opposed to the extension of slavery. The fact that he was a Southerner and a slaveholder was sufficient to reassure the South.

Page 203. *Pinto.*

Pseudonym of Mr. Charles F. Briggs (1810-1877), the same who was afterwards associated with Edgar A. Poe on the *Broadway Review*.

Page 204. *The darned Proviso.*

August 8, 1846, the President addressed a message to both Houses asking for \$2,000,000 to conclude a peace with Mexico and recompense her for her proposed cession of territory. On the same day McKay, of North Carolina, introduced a bill into the lower House for this purpose. David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania, a Democrat and a zealous friend of annexation, moved as a proviso that slavery should forever be excluded from the new territory. The motion was suddenly and unexpectedly carried by a vote of 83 to 54. It did not come to a vote in the Senate, for John Davis, of Massachusetts, talked it to death by a long speech in its favor. Nevertheless it became at once a burning question in both North and South. The more pronounced antislavery men of the former section tried to make it the political test in the coming campaign. The refusal of the Whig party to take up the question caused large accessions to the old Liberty party, now known as the Free-Soil, and later to become the Republican party.

Page 212. *Ashland, etc.*

It hardly need be said that Ashland was the home of Henry Clay; North Bend, of Harrison; Marshfield, of Webster; Kinderhook, of Van Buren; and Baton Rouge, of General Taylor.



Page 213. *Pheladelphia nomernee.*  
The Philadelphia nominee was General Zachary Taylor.

Page 214. *Mashfiel' speech.*  
The speech here referred to is the one delivered by Webster at Marshfield, September 1, 1848. While he affirmed that the nomination of Taylor was "not fit to be made," he nevertheless declared that he would vote for him, and advised his friends to do the same. "The sagacious, wise, and far-seeing doctrine of availability," said he, "lay at the root of the whole matter."

Page 214. *Choate.*  
Into none of his political addresses did Rufus Choate throw so much of his heart and soul as into those which upheld the failing policy of the Whig party from 1848 to 1852.

Page 215. *Buffalo.*  
On August 9, 1848, the convention containing the consolidated elements of constitutional opposition to the extension of slavery met at Buffalo. The party, calling itself the Free-Soil party now, declared its platform to be "no more slave States and no more slave territory." Martin Van Buren and Charles Francis Adams were the candidates selected. Van Buren was chosen because it was thought he might attract Democratic votes. His opposition to the extension of slavery was not very energetic. In his letter accepting the nomination he commended the convention for having taken no decisive stand against slavery in the District of Columbia.

Page 216. *To act agin the law.*  
The slaveholding States early legislated to forbid education and free religious meetings to slaves and free people of color. Stroud's *Sketch of the Slave Laws* (Philadelphia, 1827) shows that the principal acts of this character date from the period between 1740 and 1770. This was long before the oldest anti-slavery societies were organized. Thus these laws cannot be represented as having been the result of impetuous and intemperate agitation on the part of Northern Abolitionists. They were frequently defended on this ground in the heat of the anti-slavery conflict.

#### SECOND SERIES

Page 226. *The Cotton Loan.*  
In 1861 a magnificent scheme was devised for bolstering up the Confederate government's credit. The planters signed agreements subscribing a certain portion of the next cotton and tobacco crop to the government. Using this as a basis for credit, the government issued bonds and placed about \$15,000,000 in Europe, chiefly in England. A much greater loan might have been negotiated had it not suddenly appeared that the agreements made by the planters were almost worthless. By the end of the year the plan was quietly and completely abandoned. The English bondholders had the audacity to apply for aid to the United States after the war.

Page 226. *Mem'nger.*

Charles Gustavus Memminger, although he had opposed nullification, was one of the leaders in the secession movement which began in his own State, South Carolina. On the formation of the Confederate government he was made Secretary of the Treasury. Although not without experience in the management of his State's finances he showed little skill in his new position.

Page 226. *Cornfiscatin' all debts.*  
After the failure of the Produce Loan and one or two other measures on a similarly grand scale, the Confederate government resorted to simpler means. Chief among these were the acts confiscating the property of and all debts due to alien enemies. No great number of reputable persons in the South could resolve to compound or wipe out debts involving their personal honor, so the results of the scheme were meagre.

Page 228. *MASON AND SLIDELL.*  
In the latter part of 1861 President Davis undertook to send agents or commissioners to England and France to represent the Southern cause. The men chosen were James M. Mason, of Virginia, and John Slidell, of Louisiana. On the 12th of October they left Charleston, eluded the blockading squadron, and landed at Havana. Thence they embarked for St. Thomas on the British mail-steamer Trent. On the way the Trent was stopped by Captain Wilkes, of the American man-of-war San Jacinto, and the Confederate agents were transferred as prisoners to the latter vessel. The British Government at once proclaimed the act "a great outrage," and sent a peremptory demand for the release of the prisoners and reparation. At the same time, without waiting for any explanation, it made extensive preparations for hostilities. It seemed and undoubtedly was expedient for the United States to receive Lord Russell's demand as an admission that impressment of British seamen found on board neutral vessels was unwarrantable. Acting on the demand as an admission of the principle so long contended for by the United States, Mr. Seward disavowed the act of Wilkes and released the commissioners. But it was held then and has since been stoutly maintained by many jurists that the true principles of international law will not justify a neutral vessel in transporting the agents of a belligerent on a hostile mission. On the analogy of despatches they should be contraband. The difficulty of amicable settlement at that time, however, lay not so much in the point of law as in the intensity of popular feeling on both sides of the Atlantic.

Page 231. *Belligerent rights.*  
One month after Sumter was attacked, on May 13, 1861, the Queen issued a proclamation of neutrality, according belligerent rights to the Confederacy. This was done even before Mr. Adams, the new minister from the Lincoln administration, could reach England. Commercial interest cannot excuse so precipitate a recognition. It cannot be regarded as anything

but a deliberate expression of unfriendliness towards the United States. It coldly contemplated the dissolution of the Union, favored the establishment of an independent slave-empire, and by its moral support strengthened the hands of the Rebellion and prolonged the war.

Page 231. *Confederate privateers.*

It is notorious that Confederate cruisers were built, equipped, and even partially manned in England in open disregard of the international law respecting neutrals. Mr. Adams protested constantly and emphatically against this, but in vain for the time. No notice was taken officially of the matter until it was forced on the British government in 1864. The subsequent negotiations concerning the Alabama claims, the Treaty of Washington in 1871, and the Geneva award to the United States of some fifteen million dollars, are too well known to require any mention.

Page 231. *The Caroline.*

In 1837 an insurrection broke out in Canada, and armed bodies of men styling themselves "patriots" were in open rebellion against the government. In spite of the President's message exhorting citizens of the United States not to interfere, and in defiance of the troops sent to Buffalo to carry out his orders, numbers of sympathizers from New York crossed the Niagara River and gave assistance to the insurgents. The British authorities would have been warranted in seizing the American vessel *Caroline*, which was used to transport citizens to the Canadian shore, had the seizure been made *in flagrante delicto*, or out of our territorial waters. But in crossing to the American side of the river and taking the offending vessel from her moorings these authorities committed a grave breach of neutrality. After five years of negotiation the English government finally apologized and made reparation for the injury.

Page 233. *Seward sticks a three-months' pin.*

Mr. W. H. Seward, Lincoln's Secretary of State, was at the outbreak of the Rebellion an earnest advocate of conciliation. He seemed to think that if war could be averted for a time, until the people of the seceding States perceived the true intention of the administration to be the preservation of the Union, not the promoting of Abolitionism, the Southern movement would fail. In this belief he frequently declared that the trouble would all be over in sixty days.

Page 237. *Bull Run.*

On the 21st of July, 1861, the Union troops under General McDowell were completely routed by Beauregard at Bull Run in Virginia. The North was finally convinced that the South was equipped for and determined on a desperate struggle, while the victory gave immense encouragement to the insurgents.

Page 243. *Ones' mus.*

The "Scriptural" view, according to the mind of Mr. Sawin, would have been that of Jeremiah S. Black, who saw in the case of

Onesimus St. Paul's express approval of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850.

Page 244. *Debow.*

De Bow's *Commercial Review*, published in New Orleans, Louisiana, was for some years before the war very bitter against the North, its institutions, and its society in general.

Page 244. *Simms an' Maury.*

William Gilmore Simms, the South Carolina novelist and poet, is here referred to. Matthew Fontaine Maury, of Virginia, naval officer and hydrographer, was a man of some scientific attainments. He was the author of several works on the physical geography of the sea, navigation, and astronomy. Both men were born in the same year, 1806.

Page 245. *Arms an' cannon.*

John B. Floyd, while Secretary of War in Mr. Buchanan's Cabinet, was detected in the act of stripping Northern arsenals of arms and ammunition to supply the South. He began this work as early as December, 1859, and it is not known to what extent he carried it. Pollard, a Southern historian, says the South entered the war with 150,000 small-arms of the most approved modern pattern, all of which it owed to the government at Washington. Floyd resigned because some forts and posts in the South were not given up to the rebels.

Page 245. *Admittin' we wuz nat'lly right.*

President Buchanan's message of the first Monday of December, 1860, declared "the long-continued and intemperate interference of the Northern people with the question of slavery in the Southern States" had at last produced its natural effect; disunion was impending, and if those States could not obtain redress by constitutional means, secession was justifiable and the general government had no power to prevent it. The effect these utterances had in spreading and intensifying the spirit of secession is incalculable.

Page 246. *On the jump to interfere.*

During the larger part of the war great apprehension of attempts on the part of foreign powers to interfere prevailed in the Northern States. With the exception of Russia and Denmark, all Europe inclined toward the South. Our form of government was not favored by them, and they were not unwilling to see its failure demonstrated by a complete disruption. For a long time it was very generally believed that the South would be victorious in the end. Had the Confederacy at any time had a bright prospect of success, it is likely that England or France might have offered to interfere. Indeed, the success of the French scheme to set up a military empire in Mexico in defiance of the Monroe doctrine entirely depended on the contingency of a victory for secession. Napoleon therefore was urgent for mediation. The subject was suggested several times by the French foreign minister in his correspondence with Mr. Seward, and was pressed on the British Government by France.

Page 249. *The Border States.*

The Border States, by contiguity to the North

and natural unfitness for a very profitable system of slave-labor, were slow to take a definite stand. President Lincoln's policy was to proceed cautiously at first, keep the slavery question in the background, and enlist the sympathies of these States by appeals to their attachment to the Union. Although the people of Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri were pretty evenly divided, the State governments were kept from seceding. Without the support of the Republican Congressmen from this section, Lincoln could not have carried out his abolition policy.

Page 249. *Hampton Roads.*

The battle of Hampton Roads, at the entrance of Chesapeake Bay in Virginia, is remarkable for the revolution in naval warfare which it began. The utter worthlessness of wooden against armored vessels was suddenly and convincingly demonstrated. On the 8th of March, 1862, the Confederate armored ram Virginia, formerly Merrimac, made terrible havoc among the old wooden men-of-war stationed about Fortress Monroe. But at nine o'clock that night the little Monitor steamed into the Roads to the assistance of the shattered Federal navy. The next day's battle is one of the romances of war. Had Mr. Wilbur waited for the next Southern mail before writing this letter, the Devil might have had less credit given him.

Page 251. *From the banks o' my own Mississippi.*

In the period from 1830 to 1840, the sudden and healthy increase of immigration and the flattering industrial prospect induced many Western and Southern States to make lavish expenditures for internal improvements. Their credit was good and they borrowed too largely. After the financial crisis of 1837, insolvency stared them in the face. A number repudiated, among whom Mississippi in particular was heavily indebted. Her securities were largely held in England. It added nothing to the credit of the Confederacy that Jefferson Davis had been an earnest advocate of repudiation.

Page 252. *Roanoke, Bufort, Millspring.*

The loss of Roanoke Island, on the coast of North Carolina, February 8, 1862, was a severe one to the South. The finest harbor on the Southern coast was that of Port Royal, South Carolina, in the centre of the sea-island cotton district. This point the North fixed on as the best for a base of operations, and on October 29, 1861, a fleet of fifty vessels, including thirty-three transports, was sent against it. A fierce attack was begun on November 7, and on the next day the two forts, Walker and Beauregard, capitulated. Without encountering further opposition the Federal troops took possession of the town of Beaufort, on an island in the harbor. January 19, 1862, the Confederates under Crittenden were defeated with considerable loss at Millspring, Kentucky, by General G. H. Thomas.

Page 252. *Recognition.*

Recognition of independence by the European powers, particularly France and England, would of course have been of the greatest value to the South. It is said that Mr. Roebuck's motion in the House of Commons to recognize the Confederate States would have passed but for the timely news of Gettysburg. Certainly if it had, France would not have been slow to follow. It is difficult to overestimate the disastrous effect such events would have had on the Northern cause.

Page 253. *Your Belmonts, Vallandighams, Woodses.*

Mr. August Belmont, of New York, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee from 1860 to 1872, although opposed to secession, still attributed the cause and the responsibility for the continuance of the war to the Republican Administration. He led his party in clamoring for peace and conciliation, especially in 1864, and bitterly opposed reconstruction. Clement L. Vallandigham, of Dayton, Ohio, was the most conspicuous and noisy one of the Peace Democrats during the war. His treasonable and seditious utterances finally led to his banishment to the South in May, 1863. Thence he repaired to Canada, where he remained while his party made him their candidate in the next gubernatorial campaign, in which he was ignominiously defeated. The Woodses were the brothers Benjamin and Fernando Wood, prominent Democrats of New York city. The former was editor of the *Daily News* and a Representative in Congress. The latter was several times Mayor of New York, and for twelve years a Representative in Congress.

Page 253. *Columbus.*

After the fall of Fort Donelson, Columbus, Kentucky, was no longer tenable, and Beauregard ordered General Polk to evacuate it. March 3, 1862, a scouting party of Illinois troops, finding the post deserted, occupied it, and when Sherman approached the next day he found the Union flag flying over the town.

Page 253. *Donelson.*

The capture of Fort Donelson, in Tennessee, February 16, 1862, by General Grant, was one of several Union successes in the West, whose value was almost entirely neutralized by McClellan's dilatory conduct of the Army of the Potomac. General John B. Floyd's precipitate retreat from the fort as the Union forces approached was afterwards represented in one of his official reports as an heroic exploit.

Page 256. *Taney.*

Roger B. Taney, of Maryland, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1836 to 1864. He is chiefly notable for the Dred Scott decision, in 1857, in which he held that a negro was not a "person" in the contemplation of the Constitution, and hence "had no rights a white man was bound to respect;" that the Constitution recognized property in slaves, and that this ownership was as much entitled to protection in the Territories as any other species of property. According to this, all legislation by Congress



on slavery, except in its aid, was unconstitutional.

Page 257. *Compromise System.*

Henry Clay was the "great compromiser." The aim of his life was the preservation of the Union even at the cost of extending slave territory. The three compromises for which he is famous were the Missouri in 1820, the Tariff in 1833, and the California or "Omnibus" Compromise in 1850, the most conspicuous feature of which was the Fugitive Slave Law.

Page 257. *S. J. Court.*

At the beginning of Lincoln's administration, five of the Supreme Court Justices, an absolute majority, were from the South, and had always been State-rights Democrats.

Page 259. *The Law-'n'-Order Party of old Cincinnati.*

In Cincinnati, on March 24, 1862, Wendell Phillips, while attempting to deliver one of his lectures on slavery and the war, was attacked by a mob and very roughly handled.

Page 267. *Gov'nor Seymour.*

Horatio Seymour (1810-1886), of Utica, New York, was one of the most prominent and respected men in the Democratic party, and a bitter opponent of Lincoln. He had at this time been recently elected Governor of New York on a platform that denounced almost every measure the government had found it necessary to adopt for the suppression of the Rebellion. His influence contributed not a little to the encouragement of that spirit which inspired the Draft Riot in the city of New York in July, 1863.

Page 268. *Pres'dunt's proclamation.*

In the autumn of 1862 Mr. Lincoln saw that he must either retreat or advance boldly against slavery. He had already proceeded far enough against it to rouse a dangerous hostility among Northern Democrats, and yet not far enough to injure the institution or enlist the sympathy of pronounced anti-slavery men. He determined on decisive action. On September 22, 1862, he issued a monitory proclamation giving notice that on the first day of the next year he would, in the exercise of his war-power, emancipate all slaves of those States or parts of States in rebellion, unless certain conditions were complied with. This proclamation was at once violently assailed by the Democrats, led by such men as Seymour, and for a time the opposition threatened disaster to the administration. The elections in the five leading free States — New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois — went against the Republicans. But with the aid of New England, the West, and, not least of all, the Border Slave States, the President was assured a majority of about twenty in the new House to carry out his abolition policy.

Page 269. *KETTELOPOTOMACHIA.*

The incident furnishing the occasion for this poem was a Virginia duel, or rather a free fight. Mr. H. R. Pollard, of the *Richmond Examiner*, had some difficulty with Messrs. Coleman and N. P. Tyler, of the *Enquirer*, concerning the public printing. On Friday,

January 5, 1866, all three gentlemen met in the rotunda of the Virginia Capitol, and proceeded to settle their dispute by an appeal to revolvers. Six shots were fired, but no damage resulted, except to a marble statue of Washington.

Page 270. *Letcheris et Floydis magnisque Extra ordine Billis.*

John Letcher (1813-1884), a Virginia lawyer and politician, was several times in Congress, and was Governor of his State from 1860 to 1864. John B. Floyd (1805-1863) was Governor of Virginia from 1849 to 1852, Secretary of War in Buchanan's Cabinet, and a brigadier in the Confederate service. William Smith, of King George County, Virginia, was the proprietor of an old line of coaches running through Virginia and the Carolinas. He was called "Extra Billy" because he charged extra for every package, large or small, which his passengers carried. Mr. Smith himself, however, attributed his nickname to his extra service to the State. He was several times a Congressman, twice Governor of Virginia, and a Confederate Brigadier-General.

Page 281. *Seward.*

Under the influence of Mr. Seward, President Andrew Johnson developed a policy of reconstruction directly opposed to the views of Congress and the mass of the Republican party. He believed in punishing individuals, if necessary, but that all the States ought to be re-installed at once in the position they had occupied in 1860. The guarantees against disloyalty he proposed to exact from the South were few and feeble. Congress, on the other hand, determined to keep the subdued States in a position somewhat resembling that of territories and under military surveillance until it could be satisfied that four years' war would not be without good results. Its chief aim was to secure the safety of the negro, who had been freed by the thirteenth Amendment in December, 1865. These differences of plan led to a protracted and bitter contest between the executive and legislative departments, culminating in the unsuccessful attempt to impeach Johnson in March, 1868. The Congressional policy was carried out over the President's vetoes. Among other conditions the Southern States were required to ratify the fourteenth and fifteenth Amendments, giving citizenship and suffrage to the blacks, before being qualified for readmission to the Union.

Page 283. *Mac.*

General George B. McClellan was one of the leaders of the Northern Democracy during the war, and the presidential nominee against Lincoln in 1864.

Page 284. *Johnson's speech an' veto message.*

The Civil Rights Act of March, 1866, had just been the occasion of an open rupture between Congress and the President. The bill conferring extensive rights on freedmen, passed both Houses, but was vetoed by Johnson. It was quickly passed again over his veto.

Page 284. *A temp'ry party can be based on 't.*

Johnson's plan of reconstruction did, indeed,



furnish the material for the next Democratic platform in the presidential campaign of 1868.

Page 284. *Tyler*.

John Tyler, who had been chosen Vice-President in 1840, succeeded to the Presidency on the death of Harrison one month after the inauguration. He abandoned the policy of the party that elected him, and provoked just such a contest with it as Johnson did.

Page 300. AN INVITATION.

[Lowell entered this poem in his several editions as addressed to J. F. H., initials which meant nothing to the general public, but recalled to the contemporaries of his college days a Virginian gentleman, a graduate of Harvard of the class of 1840, greatly endeared by his temper and gifts to his early associates and especially to Lowell. Not long after his graduation he went to Germany to study; he disappeared from sight, turning up at odd times in odd places. He did much various study and had much varied experience. After many years he returned home. When the war broke out he joined the Confederate army as a surgeon, and died worn out with hard service in 1862.]

Page 308. AFTER THE BURIAL.

["To show you that I am not unable to go along with you in the feeling expressed in your letter, I will copy a few verses out of my common-place book.

Yes, faith is a goodly anchor  
When the skies are blue and clear;  
At the bows it hangs right stalwart  
With a sturdy iron cheer.

But when the ship goes to pieces,  
And the tempests are all let loose,  
It rushes plumb down to the sea-depths,  
'Mid slimy sea-weed and ooze.

Better then one spar of memory,  
One broken plank of the past,  
For our human hearts to cling to,  
Adrift in the whirling vast.

To the spirit the cross of the spirit,  
To the flesh its blind despair,  
Clutching fast the thin-worn locket  
With its threads of gossamer hair.

O friend! thou reasonest bravely,  
Thy preaching is wise and true;  
But the earth that stops my darling's ears  
Makes mine insensate, too.

That little shoe in the corner,  
So worn and wrinkled and brown,  
With its emptiness confutes you,  
And argues your wisdom down.

"But enough, dear Sydney, of death and sorrow. They are not subjects which I think it profitable or wise to talk about, think about, or write about often. Death is a private tutor. We have no fellow-scholars, and must lay our lessons to heart alone." Lowell to Sydney Howard Gay, March 17, 1850.]

Page 350. THE CATHEDRAL.

["Now for Ruskin's criticisms. As to words,

I am something of a purist, though I like best the word that best says the thing. (You know I have studied lingo a little.) I am fifty-one years old, however, and have in one sense won my spurs. I claim the right now and then to knight a plebeian word for good service in the field. But it will almost always turn out that it has after all good blood in its veins, and can prove its claim to be put in the saddle. *Rote* is a familiar word all along our seaboard to express that dull and continuous burden of the sea heard inland before or after a great storm. The root of the word may be in *rumpere*, but it is more likely in *rotare*, from the identity of this sea-music with that of the rote—a kind of hurdy-gurdy with which the jongleurs accompanied their song. It is one of those Elizabethan words which we New-Englanders have preserved along with so many others. It occurs in the 'Mirror for Magistrates,' 'the sea's rote,' which Nares, not understanding, would change to *rore*! It is not to be found in any provincial glossary, but I caught it alive at Beverly and the Isles of Shoals. Like 'mobbed queen,' 'tis 'good.'

"Whiff Ruskin calls 'an American elevation of English lower word.' Not a bit of it. I have always thought 'the whiff and wind of his fell sword' in 'Hamlet' rather fine than otherwise. Ben also has the word. *Downshod* means shod with down. I doubted about this word myself—but I wanted it. As to *misgave*, the older poets used it as an active verb, and I have done with it as all poets do with language. My meaning is clear, and that is the main point. His objection to 'spume-sliding down the baffled decuman' I do not understand. I think if he will read over his 'ridiculous Germanism' (p. 13 seq.) with the context he will see that he has misunderstood me. (By the way, 'in our life alone doth Nature live' is Coleridge's, not Wordsworth's.) I never hesitate to say anything I have honestly felt because some one may have said it before, for it will always get a new color from the new mind, but here I was not saying the same thing by a great deal. *Nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu* would be nearer—though not what I meant. Nature (inanimate), which is the image of the mind, sympathizes with all our moods. I would have numbered the lines as Ruskin suggests, only it looks as if one valued them too much. That sort of thing should be posthumous. You may do it for me, my dear Charles, if my poems survive me. Two dropt stitches I must take up which I notice on looking over what I have written. Ruskin surely remembers Carlyle's 'whiff of grape-shot.' That is one. The other is that *rote* may quite as well be from the Icelandic *at hriota* = to snore; but my studies more and more persuade me that where there is in English a Teutonic and a Romance root meaning the same thing, the two are apt to melt into each other so as to make it hard to say from which our word comes." . . . *Letters II.*, pp. 65-67.]

Page 399. PHOEBE.

[The correspondence concerning this poem with the original form of the verses is here given in detail.

TO R. W. GILDER.

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
LONDON, September 4, 1881.

Dear Mr. Gilder, — Your telegram scared me, for, coming at an unusual hour, I thought it brought ill news from Washington. My relief on finding it innocent has perhaps made me too good-natured towards the verses I send you, but I have waited sixty-two years for them, and am willing to wait as many more (not here) before they are printed. Do what you like with them. They mean only my hearty good-will towards you and my hope for your success in your new undertaking. . . .

Faithfully yours, J. R. LOWELL.

If I could see the proofs, very likely I could better it — they sober one and bring one to his bearings. Perhaps the metaphysical (or whatever they are) stanzas — what I mean is moralizing — were better away. Perhaps too many compound epithets — but I had to give up "visionary" in order to save "legendary," which was essential. Perhaps a note, saying that so long as the author can remember, a pair of these birds (give ornithological name — *muscicapa*?) have built on jutting brick in an archway leading to the house at Elmwood — or does everybody know what a phœbe is? I am so old that I am accustomed to people's being ignorant of whatever you please.

#### PHOEBE

Ere pales in heaven the morning star,  
A bird, the loneliest of its kind,  
Hears Dawn's faint footfall from afar  
While all its mates are dumb and blind.

It is a wee sad-colored thing,  
As shy and secret as a maid,  
That, ere in choir the robins ring,  
Pipes its own name like one afraid.

It seems pain-prompted to repeat  
The story of some ancient ill,  
But *Phæbe!* *Phæbe!* sadly sweet  
Is all it says, and then is still.

It calls and listens. Earth and sky,  
Hushed by the pathos of its fate,  
Listen, breath held, but no reply  
Comes from its doom-divided mate.

*Phæbe!* it calls and calls again,  
And Ovid, could he but have heard,  
Had hung a legendary pain  
About the memory of the bird;

A pain articulate so long  
In penance of some mouldered crime  
Whose ghost still flies the Furies' throng  
Down the waste solitudes of Time;

Or waif from young Earth's wonder-hour  
When gods found mortal maidens fair,  
And will malign was joined with power  
Love's kindly laws to overbear.

*Phæbe!* is all it has to say  
In plaintive cadence o'er and o'er,  
Like children that have lost their way  
And know their names, but nothing more.

Is it a type, since nature's lyre  
Vibrates to every note in man,  
Of that insatiable desire,  
Meant to be so, since life began?

Or a fledged satire, sent to rasp  
Their jaded sense, who, tired so soon  
With shifting life's doll-dresses, grasp  
Gray-bearded babies, at the moon?

I, in strange lands at gray of dawn  
Wakeful, have heard that fruitless plaint  
Through Memory's chambers deep withdrawn  
Renew its iterations faint.

So nigh! yet from remotest years  
It seems to draw its magic, rife  
With longings unappeased and tears  
Drawn from the very source of life.

Let who has felt compute the strain  
Of struggle with abuses strong,  
The doubtful course, the helpless pain  
Of seeing best intents go wrong.

We, who look on with critic eyes,  
Exempt from action's crucial test,  
Human ourselves, at least are wise  
In honoring one who did his best.

#### TO THE SAME.

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
LONDON, September 5, 1881.

Dear Mr. Gilder, — I sent off the verses yesterday, and now write in great haste to say that in my judgment the stanza beginning "Or waif from young Earth's," etc., were better away. Also for "doom-divided" print "doom-dissevered." I have not had time to mull over the poem as I should like.

Faithfully yours, J. R. LOWELL.

P. S. I may write in a day or two suppressing more, after I have had time to think.

#### TO THE SAME.

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
LONDON, September 6, 1881.

Dear Mr. Gilder, — I bother you like a boy with his first essay in verse. I wrote yesterday to ask the omission of a stanza — but last night, being sleepless, as old fellows like me are too often apt to be, I contrived to make a stanza which had been tongue-tied say what I wished.

Let it go thus,

Waif of the young World's wonder-hour  
.....  
..... to overbear, (comma).

Then go on —

Like Progne, did it feel the stress  
And coil of the prevailing words  
Close round its being and compress  
Man's ampler nature to a bird's?

This manages the transition, which was wanting. Perhaps this might follow:—

One only memory left of all  
The motley crowd of vanished scenes,  
Hers—and vain impulse to recall  
By repetition what it means.

Faithfully yours,  
J. R. LOWELL.

TO THE SAME.

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
LONDON, September 8, 1881.

Dear Mr. Gilder,—This is positively the last! I wish to omit the stanza beginning "Or a winged satire," etc. I have been convinced by a friend whom I have consulted that it was a cuckoo's egg in my nest. Item. The verse that bothered me most of all was this:

Listen, breath held, but no reply, etc.

I wished to have a distinct pause after "listen," in accordance with the sense. Somehow I could not get the right, and "breath held" was clearly the wrong one, awkward, and with the same vowel sound in both halves. Print—

Listen: no whisper of reply  
Is heard of doom-dissevered mate.

No; that won't do, either, with its assonance of "heard" and "dissevered"—so, though I prefer "dissevered" for sense, I will go back to the original word "divided," which I suppose was instinctive.

This is positively my last dying speech and confession. You need fear nothing more from me. I fancy you ducking your head for fear of another rap every time the postman comes.

I hope you will like my little poem, and tell me so if you don't. Kindest regards to Mrs. Gilder.

Faithfully yours,  
J. R. LOWELL.

TO THE SAME.

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
LONDON, September 12, 1881.

... As I am writing, I add that if you think (as I am half inclined)

No whisper of reply  
Comes from its doom-dissevered mate  
better than the other reading, print it so.

Faithfully yours,  
J. R. LOWELL.

P. S. We are sadly anxious to-day about the President.

TO THE SAME.

HOTEL DANIELI, VENICE, October 24, 1881.

... Thank you for the printed copy. Of course I am disgusted with it. Print somehow is like a staring plaster-cast compared with the soft and flowing outlines, the modest nudity of the manuscript clay. But it is a real pleasure to me that you like it.

"Robins ring" is right, and whenever you spend a June night at Elmwood (as I hope you will so soon as I am safe there once more) you will recognize its truth. There are hundreds of 'em going at once, like the bells here last night (Sunday), with a perfect indecency of disregard for rhythm or each other. Mr. Burroughs, I hear, has been criticising my knowledge of out-doors. God bless his soul! I had been living in the country thirty years (I fancy it must be) before he was born, and if anybody ever lived in the open air it was I. So be at peace. By the way, I took Progne merely because she was changed into a little bird. I should have preferred a male, and was thinking of a fellow (transformed, I think by Medea), but can't remember his name. While I am about it I question "wee." Is it English? I had no dictionary at hand. But there is one atrocity—"moldered." Why do you give in to these absurdities? Why abscond in to this petty creek from the great English main of orthography? 'Tis not quite so bad as "I don't know as" for "I don't know that," but grazes it and is of a piece with putting one's knife in one's mouth.]

#### V. A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF MR. LOWELL'S POEMS

IN arranging this list the editor has relied first on the dates supplied by the author, and then on the dates of periodicals and books in which the poems otherwise undated first appeared. Whenever the first appearance of a poem has not been determined precisely, the title is printed in italic under the year when the volume first including it was published.

1839. Threnodia.  
The Beggar.  
Summer Storm.
1840. The Sirens.  
Love.  
Sonnet: To A. C. L.  
Sonnet (I would not have this perfect love of ours).  
Sonnet (For this true nobleness I seek in vain).  
Remembered Music.  
Irené.  
Serenade.  
With a Pressed Flower.  
My Love.
1841. To Perdita, Singing.  
The Moon.  
Ode (In the old days of awe and keen-eyed wonder).  
A Prayer.  
Song (Violet! sweet violet!).  
Rosaline.  
Sonnet (What were I, Love, if I were stripped of thee).  
Sonnet: To the Spirit of Keats.  
Sonnet (Great truths are portions of the soul of man).

- Sonnet (I ask not for those thoughts,  
that sudden leap).  
Sonnet: To M. W., on her Birthday.  
Sonnet (My Love, I have no fear that  
thou shouldst die).  
Sonnet (I cannot think that thou shouldst  
pass away).  
Sonnet (There never yet was flower so  
fair in vain).  
Sonnet: Sub Pondere crescit.  
Si descendero in Infernum, ades.  
1842. The Forlorn.  
Midnight.  
The Rose: A Ballad.  
A Parable (Worn and footsore was the  
Prophet).  
Song (O moonlight deep and tender).  
Sonnet (Beloved, in the noisy city here).  
Sonnets: On Reading Wordsworth's Son-  
nets in Defence of Capital Punishment.  
(Six sonnets.)  
Sonnet: To M. O. S.  
Sonnet (Our love is not a fading earthly  
flower).  
The Shepherd of King Admetus.  
An Incident in a Railroad Car.  
Elegy on the Death of Dr. Channing.  
1843. The Fountain.  
The Fatherland.  
Sonnet: In Absence.  
Sonnet: The Street.  
A Legend of Brittany.  
Prometheus.  
A Glance Behind the Curtain.  
Stanzas on Freedom.  
*L'Envoi (Whether my heart hath wiser  
grown or not).*  
*Allegra.*  
*The Heritage.*  
*A Requiem.*  
Sonnet: Wendell Phillips.  
Sonnet (I grieve not that ripe Knowledge  
takes away).  
Sonnet: To J. R. Giddings.  
*The Token.*  
*Rhæcus.*  
*A Chippewa Legend.*  
1844. Columbus.  
On the Death of a Friend's Child.  
Hunger and Cold.  
The Present Crisis.  
1845. An Incident of the Fire at Hamburg.  
To the Past.  
To the Future.  
A Contrast.  
On the Capture of Fugitive Slaves near  
Washington.  
To the Dandelion.  
The Ghost-Seer.  
Eurydice.  
An Interview with Miles Standish.  
1846. The Falcon.  
The Oak.  
Letter from Boston.  
The Biglow Papers [Beginning of].  
On the Death of Charles Turner Torrey.  
An Indian-Summer Reverie.
1847. The Landlord.  
Extreme Unction.  
*Above and Below.*  
*The Growth of the Legend.*  
*Song: To M. L.*  
*To a Pine-Tree.*  
*The Search.*  
*The Captive.*  
*The Birch-Tree.*  
*Studies for Two Heads.*  
*On a Portrait of Dante by Giotto.*  
*The Changeling.*  
*The Pioneer.*  
*Longing.*  
*Hebe.*  
1848. The Sower.  
Ambrose.  
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1849. Trial.  
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1854. The Singing Leaves.  
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1857. My Portrait Gallery.  
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1858. The Dead House.  
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1859. Villa Franca.  
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1861. Ode to Happiness.  
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1863. Two Scenes from the Life of Blondel.  
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*For a Memorial Window to Sir Walter Raleigh, set up in St. Margaret's, Westminster, by American Contributors.*  
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 1890. *Fragments of an Unfinished Poem.*  
 1891. *On a Bust of General Grant.*  
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